DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 281 698 RC 016 210

AUTHOR Boloz, Sigmund; And Others
TITLE Just Beyond Your Fingertips: American Indian Children Participating in Language Development.
INSTITUTION ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools, Las Cruces, N. Mex.
SPONS AGENCY Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE 87
GRANT NIE-400-83-0023
NOTE 129p.
AVAILABLE FROM ERIC/CRESS, New Mexico State University, Department 3AP, Box 30001, Las Cruces, NM 88003-0001 ($9.95).
PUB TYPE Guides - Classroom Use - Guides (For Teachers) (052) -- Information Analyses - ERIC Information Analysis Products (071)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC06 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *American Indian Education; American Indians; Educational Strategies; Elementary Education; Interdisciplinary Approach; Language Acquisition; *Language Arts; *Language Experience Approach; *Learning Activities; Parent Participation; Primary Education; Program Descriptions; Teacher Attitudes; Tribes; Worksheets; *Writing (Composition)
IDENTIFIERS Arizona (Ganado); *Ganado Language Arts Development Project AZ; *Navajo (Nation)

ABSTRACT

This publication describes the development, implementation, and success of the Ganado Language Arts Development (GLAD) Project on the Navajo reservation in northeastern Arizona which develops the foundation for literacy in each student, expands and enriches pedogogical competencies of staff in teaching language arts, and develops/strenghtens parental awareness/support for school programming. The first three chapters discuss the early years, set parameters for change, review ideas to improve the school and establish the language program, and describe the excitement within the project today. Chapter 4 reviews issues of early literacy related to creating an interactively rich, trusting environment. Chapter 5 and 6 present ideas for working in kindergarten and first grade classrooms. Chapter 7 examines integration and writing across the curriculum, while Chapter 8 focuses on writing in the second and third grades. Chapter 9 addresses teachers' attitudes toward change and the effects of involvement in writing and risk taking. Chapter 10 discusses the need to implement progress across the school as a whole and reflects on special areas of the school. The book concludes with a bibliography and a section about the contributors. The book is highlighted with reproductions/examples of student writing (paragraphs, poems, posters) and sample writing exercises and worksheets. (NEC)

# Just Beyond Your Fingertips:

## American Indian Children Participati
## In Language Development

ED281698

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# Just Beyond Your Fingertips: American Indian Children Participating in Language Development

by

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1987

ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools
(ERIC/CRESS)
New Mexico State University
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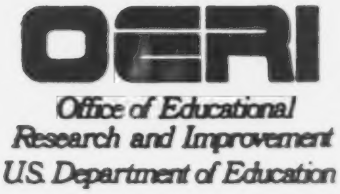
(505) 646-2623




This publication was prepared with funding from the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education, under contract no. NIE-400-83-0023. The opinions expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect the positions or policies of OERI or the Department of Education.

The cover was designed by Debbie Guerrero utilizing a photograph taken by Fred Bia, a Navajo from Rough Rock, Arizona. Children on the cover are (left to right): Preston "Stoney" Boloz, Shelley Bia, Shannon Marie Bia, Angelita Boloz.

Artwork on the worksheets was provided by Abraham Jones, Navajo, an Instructional Aide at Ganado Primary School, Ganado, Arizona. Examples of student writings were provided by the students at Ganado Primary School, Ganado, Arizona.

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## PREFACE

An enormous expression of approval echoed around them as Mrs. Williams guided the six kindergarteners out of the gym. Roderick's young eyes focused on the person who had taught him these past months. "Teacher, did we do good"? he asked anxiously.

Still trying to recover from the crowd's reaction, she reassuringly smiled at the young boy, "Yes! You did VERY good!"

She tucked her charts under one arm and offered him her free hand. The group paused to allow a straggler to catch up. Roderick pressed his inquiry. "Did Mr. Boloz like our reading"?

"Oh yes, Roderick!" she answered. "He thinks you're VERY smart!"

Roderick beamed and the others shared his delight. But as the brood moved out towards the primary school he became thoughtful and blurted, "Teacher, how did we gots so smart"?

Although the applause had startled the young Navajo children, it was difficult to determine who was more surprised by what had happened there a few minutes earlier, them or me. Beaming like a light house, I had announced that the students would read. I knew that they would do well, but when I detected the parents' confused looks, I crossed my fingers and bit my lip. In spite of her professional movements, I sensed that Mrs. Williams and I knew the same prayers.

Reading at the Parent's Day assembly had tested the six tiny neophytes who huddled near their teacher. Three hundred parents and several hundred students had watched the beginners nervously read their Language Experience Approach (LEA) charts.

But it had been marvelous. Although they had expected the kindergarten students to dance, seeing the tiny children read fluently had delighted the audience--and had saved my lip.



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Education for Navajo children has come a long way at Ganado Primary School. Although cultural activities are still prominent within the curriculum, the school is now winning state recognition for its academic excellence. In fact, the school has had 5 of its programs named as "quality programs," and in 1983 the school was named by the Arizona Department of Education as one of the 10 outstanding primary schools in Arizona.

"How did we get so smart"? Roderick asked an important question. In this book we attempt to answer that question, but this book is also a celebration of a beginning. It fits into no purist slogans, nor is it a neat plan. It is an affirmation that there are not right or wrong approaches. Those decisions depend on the children, the school aims, and the children's environment. But this book is us; imperfect, a little older and, we feel, a little wiser.

This book has 10 chapters. Chapter 1 is our introduction and therefore discusses our early years and sets some parameters for change. Ideas that should be considered in improving a school and in establishing a language program are covered in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 discusses the excitement within "the Project" today. These three chapters can provide a framework for understanding the rest of the book.

Chapters 4 and 5 review the issues of early literacy and implementation of programs in kindergarten classrooms. Chapter 6 offers some ideas for working in the first grade. Chapter 7 looks at integration and writing across the curriculum, while Chapter 8 focuses on writing in the second and third grades.

Chapter 9 addresses teachers' attitudes toward change and the effects of involvement in writing and risk taking. It also discusses ways to involve parents. Chapter 10 concludes the major sections with a discussion of the need to implement programs across the school as a whole and reflects on special areas of the school. The book concludes with a bibliography and a section about the contributors.

As I pen this preface, it is important to note that we have already begun implementing a 5-year school improvement plan. We know we can do better, and we will. However, this book will be useful to those people who are just beginning or who need support for their ideas. This book, after all, is a simple account of how we got started and how we lost control.

Just Beyond Your Fingertips is a reminder that the greatest teaching resource exists in every classroom. We as educators are always looking for the perfect program, the perfect text, or the perfect approach that will shoot test scores out of sight, and yet we overlook the most powerful element for change. The next time you enter your classroom, stretch your hand out in front of your face and look through your fingertips. Extend that hand and you will see children. Look hard. Study them closely. Excite them and you will be surprised by what can happen. Allow and expect them to participate in their own education, and there will be little that can stand in your way. CHILDREN ARE YOUR GREATEST EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE!

This book is a tribute to people. Big people and little people. There are many who contributed to the success of our project and to this book whom you will not meet in these pages.

First, there are those who trusted me and allowed us to run with our ideas--Albert A. Yazzie, our Superintendent, and Peter M. Belletto, our Associate Superintendent. Then there are my fellow principals, Ronald Brutz, Phillip Bluehouse, and Richard Varrati, who honestly care about children and quality programs. A special thanks must also go to Elaine Roanhorse Benally of ERIC/CRESS, who worked closely with us on the completion of this project.

When I think of persons who inspired me, I think of Jane Hansen and Donald Graves of the University of New Hampshire. The short time I spent with them made my itch for excitement in the classroom grow even stronger. I give special thanks to my brother Frank, in whose footsteps I followed. His image kept me aiming higher than he'll ever know.

The dedication to excellence of my long time friends, Larry Wallen and Carl Foster, pushed and challenged me. I give thanks to those staff members over the years who have believed in themselves and in children. They have made our school a better place because of their belief. They have been exciting to be around.

Lastly to my children Angie, Autumn, and Preston, and to my wife, Irene, I apologize. The time this book took from you can never be replaced.

Sigmund A. Boloz
Ganado, Arizona

## INTRODUCTION

by Sigmund Boloz and Patricia Loughrin

The second grade girls were discussing the spelling of the word "cafeteria" as they methodically completed the complaint form. In their earnest dialogue, they switched back and forth from English to Navajo. With their three noses competing for room over the front office counter, the students were filing a grievance. They had a problem, and filling out the complaint form is the best way to get help in this school.

Although the completed form would air their difficulty, the students' conduct represented a deeper message: children attending Ganado Primary School are expected to apply their education in real situations, and the students know that their communication attempts are taken seriously.

These students are participants in a unique, school-wide language project which was first implemented in 1980. This program for grades K-3, known as the GLAD (Ganado Language Arts Development) Project, is located on the Navajo reservation in northeastern Arizona. Test data indicate mean grade equivalents which are as much as a year-and-a-half higher than they were just 5 years ago. In addition, the Project to date has published 42 volumes of student writing. At the same time, positive changes are taking place within the school community. Surveys completed by parents have indicated that 98 percent support continuation of the Project, and at many school functions there has been standing room only.

Students also seem to be more comfortable with the school environment as absences averaged less than 6 days per child this year, a startling 50 percent decrease over 3 years ago. Staff collaboration, a most important part of the Project, is high. During the school year many teachers and aides voluntarily participate in two to three monthly half-hour writing seminars where research, methodology, and local successes are discussed and demonstrated.

As I listened to those girls in deep discussion, I was reminded of how serious children are, and of the pride that students exhibit when they pull their crumbled jokes and word lists from their pockets. I thought back to where this all began, before the Joke of the Day, the Word of the Day, the complaint forms, and the writing contests. I thought back to that classroom 14 years ago. I was a first-year teacher, and first-year teachers just try to survive.

**Looking Back**

Teaching an eager class of second grade Navajo students that first year, I was amazed by their alertness and by their desire to learn. However, like many new reservation teachers, I soon realized how frustrated the children and I were by the materials and content of the class. The language of instruction and the texts within that class were designed to appeal to the middle class English-speaking child or to the black inner-city child. Our situation was vastly different.

Convinced that my teaching needed to be adjusted, I implemented new strategies. Although I began slowly, concentrating on only one new approach each few weeks, I found that by the end of the year we had developed an exciting program. We frequently talked and wrote about the real world. We discussed the firsthand experiences which we had lived or which I could offer. We took walking field trips into the community and wrote about hands-on activities. We used the videotape machine to produce bilingual films which were about using the telephone and about designing, building, and firing model rockets. Our bilingual books about the construction of the Rough Rock road and about our growth as writers were published by the school's curriculum center.

We videotaped pantomimes of stories as they were told on records, established pen pals across the country, translated Navajo radio commercials into English, and made word lists of everything. We studied the geography of the National Football League and charted the teams' progress. These materials became the core of our reading and were supplemented by the text when appropriate. One might say that the early seeds of the GLAD Project were planted 14 years ago within that second grade classroom. Planted not because someone told me that allowing students to participate in their own education would work, but because it did work.

Each new year offered greater educational challenges. I learned not to expect large, immediate changes in my students, and to allow time for new projects to develop and to mature before discarding the strategy. Of course there were disappointments, but education is an imperfect profession, and miracles are few and far between.

My goal was to make everyone feel good about himself or herself. I came to see that writing was the greatest equalizer. Since every student wrote on his or her own level, assignments were individualized. The students seldom competed against anyone; instead, they frequently interacted and shared. Therefore, every completed writing assignment held some success.

Although I have learned about the process of teaching over the years, I still do not understand its full potential. Looking back, we were involved in the early rudiments of not only what are now commonly called whole language, peer editing, conferencing, and publishing, but also many other strategies. However, I also realize that I held a narrow view of language teaching.

I oversimplified the communication process and viewed it as an end rather than as the means. Language could have been used to develop and refine the students' critical thinking skills. The emphasis should have been taken off the conventions of language and placed on the development of real communication. Students could have been allowed to play with language more fully, to experiment with inventive spelling, and to create and test their own theories about how English can best be communicated. We missed the richness in the various forms of writing such as cinquain, acrostics, diamante, concrete poetry, riddles, and advertisements. Finally, I might have integrated language more fully across the curriculum and, in the process, maximized instructional time, rather than viewing reading, writing, listening, and speaking as separate subjects.

I mused the "should have dones" without guilt. The amount I have yet to learn seems wondrous! I thought of the past and of the future as I watched the girls leave their written complaint and scamper off to recess to await some action. I heard the complaint form slip into my box, and even though I had not written it, I felt the pride of accomplishment. These students were participating in their own

education by applying language skills in meaningful ways. Their education had not stopped for recess.

**The GLAD Project**

My early years as a teacher gave the principal I became the courage to risk. I saw value in letting teachers follow their instincts, in using textbooks as they fit into a classroom program, and in using standardized tests as one indicator of progress rather than as a harbinger of failure. This freedom encouraged the development of the GLAD project.

Growing tremendously in size and complexity, the Project is now a process rather than a series of related products, and it touches all aspects of the school. It has been an exciting 5 years building the GLAD Project with my staff. During this time I have become convinced of the benefits of effective writing in the classroom as a sound beginning towards quality education for all children.

In that first year, the Project was an informal part of interested teachers' curricula. Actually, we did not start out with the idea of establishing a writing project, but simply with the idea of promoting writing. In fact, it was not until April of that first year that the Project was named GLAD, and that the three primary goals were established: (1) to develop the foundation for literacy in each of our students--kindergarten through third grade; (2) to expand and enrich the pedagogical competencies of each staff member in the teaching of the Language Arts; and (3) to develop and strengthen parental awareness of and support for school programming.

**Foundations for Literacy**

The development of foundations for literacy was facilitated through the Project's philosophy:

> There is a need for each child to be heard. A child will only learn to use a language if he has the opportunity to use the language. A child will learn to read a language if he finds meaning in that language. A child will learn to write a language if he finds that others find meaning in his work. (Boloz, 1980)

Working from these ideals, the classroom climate and instruction were established. In order to give the students an opportunity to use English, curriculum was shifted to student-oriented interests. While the ultimate aim is English language literacy for all students, the child, his cultural values, and the experiences which are brought to the school environment are central to the project's methodology. Focusing on each child as an individual, instruction begins at that child's functional level.

In the beginning stages of the Project, student writing assignments supplemented the adopted text. However, the texts no longer dictate instruction. Without a dependence on language workbooks, district funds began being directed toward (and last year totally financed) the Project.

Students are provided with opportunities for an abundance of writing in many forms, for many purposes, and for many audiences. Teachers note that students write more freely and that the volume of student writing and the richness of their word choices have increased.

In order to encourage the students to view writing as a meaningful experience, books written by individual classes, by grade levels, and during school-wide writing competitions are regularly published at the district's curriculum center. All students whose work appears in the book receive a copy. At 60 cents per copy, the district's investment is minimal.

In addition to the books, the newspapers, the complaint forms, pen pal projects, and school-wide competitions, the school implemented Joke of the Day and Word of the Day. In these two approaches, students are encouraged to submit found and original jokes or to submit lists of words which they have made by rearranging the letters of the Word of the Day. As jokes are read and word lists are acknowledged over the intercom, the student is recognized as the submitter.

**Expanding Pedagogical Competencies**

The role of the teacher is to provide a supportive learning environment which promotes a positive self-concept, and to create situations which encourage active participation in learning. Teachers

are to foster a writing environment which encourages composition by withholding extensive critical evaluations, by demonstrating sensitivity to the student's cultural identity, and by implementing frequent and varied writing and publishing experiences.

Although a sound language arts curriculum offers a rich source of guidance, one cannot assume that all who use the curriculum will bring to its implementation the same level of competence. The GLAD project recognizes this reality and attempts to expand and enrich each staff member's competencies through a series of writing seminars, a classroom support network, and the establishment of a professional library.

The writing seminars are usually held twice monthly and have replaced the traditional teachers' meeting. Topics include research findings, methodology, and promising practices. All staff members are invited to the seminars, and both teachers and administrators share the responsibility for the presentation of materials. The response of classroom teachers is indicated by their attendance. Most teachers attend regularly, and many of those who cannot, ask for handouts.

The classroom support network emphasizes hands-on demonstrations within the classrooms and intraclassroom visitations by teachers and administrators. The emphasis is on collaboration. Teachers who are interested in an approach but who want more detailed instruction on its application request assistance with the implementation of the idea. For example, one teacher who desired to establish a journal project was assisted on a daily basis for 2 weeks, while another who wanted to know more about how semantic association could be used to build word power was assisted for an hour. However, assistance is not forced on the teacher; rather, these services are offered only at the request of the staff member.

Over the past 5 years, consistent budget commitments have built a library which includes 500 new titles and several major journal subscriptions. Staff members are encouraged to suggest titles and frequently check out the materials for ideas and as resources in their own professional training.

**Establishing Parent Support**

While both staff and curricula development increase the success of the program, a goal of the GLAD Project is to strive for parental awareness of and support for this language arts approach. Realizing that parents can have the greatest influence on a student's school success, attempts to keep parents informed of their child's involvement in the writing process are paramount. Communication lines which have been developed through traditional means are supplemented by the distribution of class and school publications.

Supplemental reading materials, which the student has a part in creating, and school newspapers are sent into the homes of the young authors. Parents report that these publications have created an intense demonstration of pride on the part of both the student and the parents. Interest in these books has stimulated the reading of publications among students and with other family members.

An ongoing, five-item survey is sent to the home of students whose work appears in a book. Parents are asked to report whether they had prior knowledge of the Project, what the child's and family's reactions were to the book, whether they have seen the child reading the book at home, and whether they felt that the books helped the child to read. They are also asked to report whether they feel that the Project should be continued. Although at first only about 20 percent of the parents reported being aware of the Project, 98 percent reported support for continuation of the program, 92 percent reported feeling that the Project would help their child learn to read, and 86 percent reported that they had seen the child reading the book. Many parents added favorable comments, and several of the parents commented that their child's teacher should be given special awards for the effort.

**A LANGUAGE STATEMENT**

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by Sigmund Boloz and Debbie Hickman

"Totally absurd," I thought. "Have we lost perspective of what it means to be human? The author must be blinded by the imperative to 'look good' on the almighty standardized test. He no longer values the uniqueness of the individual and has forgotten that learning is a process."

The heavy rays of late summer sun beat across the breakfast table as I poured over Art Buchwald's (1984) column, "Robots Can Save Schools." "Educational standards are getting lower," it read, "and students can't read or write. According to the national results, the students are getting dumber and dumber. Therefore," the article continued, "we should enroll robots in place of students. Of course, we would keep a few students so that we would have excellent athletic programs.

"Just program the robots with artificial intelligence, the skills robots will need to replace our manpower," the article stated. "Since robots are incapable of errors, national test scores would soar, and we could once again take pride in America's schools."

Replace children with robots! Even though I knew that the article was a satire, I was incensed! I was going to tear the logic of this article apart. So, I read the piece again and again.

"If high test scores are the only thing that we value in our educational system, then let's bring in the robots!" I rebutted. "Let's program the metallic globeheads with artificial intelligence and forget about the exciting process called learning!"

I was eagerly jotting down the outline of my rebuttal when the realization overcame me. My defiance faded into embarrassment.

"In a sense," I thought, "aren't we already seeking to make all of our students perfect copies of an artificial ideal when we let the standardized tests dictate what will be taught? Aren't we already trying to program every child with the same information when we teach to the test? Aren't we already treating all students like robots when we disregard their individual differences and backgrounds and blindly follow the textbook page by page for fear we might miss something important?"

I know that there are no inherently right or wrong ways of teaching. Those judgments depend on the child, the environment, and the educational aims. The danger comes when we stop looking for the most effective techniques, when we stop questioning. The danger comes when we give up control of our decisions. The danger comes when we stop asking "why."

**A Holistic Approach**

Although education in America has improved, educational research, such as the National Assessment of Educational Progress, continues to indicate that a gap exists between the desired literacy levels and the actualized levels of English language proficiency. This is especially true of the reservation schools. While attempts have been made to address this issue through the adoption and implementation of commercial reading or language programs or through the adoption of materials to improve test taking skills, few have addressed literacy holistically, by allowing the communication skills of reading, writing, listening, and speaking to integrate and support each other.

The goal of education is literacy--not just scoring well on standardized tests. Basic literacy can be defined as the ability to use and exploit written language and its resources effectively in achieving desired outcomes. However, Graves (1975) states that the focus of elementary school literacy instruction is weighted heavily in favor of reading, as is the content of teacher training programs for elementary teachers. At the same time, he provides evidence of a decline in the time that students spend writing and in the amount of writing that students actually produce in a given year.

This lack of cohesion is noted by Cloer (1977), who states that educators are presently required to take fragmented language arts goals

and objectives and arrange them into some cohesive classroom program. In doing so, they are probably pulling back together what never should have been parted. He adds that the language arts for too long have been taught in a fragmented manner with the hope that students will successfully bring about integration at some future time.

Walker (1978) continues this line of reasoning when he states that children learn oral language as a functional system, one which is useful for the attainment of desired purposes. They learn language as a part of and along with purposeful interaction with other people. He feels that this is crucial in beginning reading, when attitudes to written language are being formed. He follows that children should learn the written form of language in a similar way. In addition, he believes that reading should not be taught apart from other learning, and that we should choose topics from concepts which children of a particular age should encounter across the whole range of the school curriculum. However, research conducted by Walker, suggests that the language used in newspapers and periodicals intended for adult readers is closer to the oral language of even 5-year-old children than is the language of the basal readers written for children of that age in respect to the core units of that language.

Spearitt (1979), in his research on the development of patterns of relationships among the communication skills, stated that while the four communication skills (reading, writing, speaking, and listening) can be identified as measuring different aspects of language in terms of actual outcomes, this does not necessarily mean that they should be treated as separate skills for teaching purposes. The same outcomes can occur in an integrated curriculum in which differences among the skills are deliberately de-emphasized. However, it is probable that if some aspects of the language curriculum are relatively neglected, children will fail to realize their full potential in language. Walker concludes that for literacy, teachers of reading and writing should build on the impressive and highly functional oral language system which children bring to their formal education.

The active and formal integration of the communication skills in holistic classroom instruction, such as Language Experience Approach, can be traced to about 1900. While Meriam (1938) advocated using the language experience approach with Mexican American children whose

background made existing books inappropriate, interest in and application of the language experience approach to teaching of reading and other communication skills to all students have expanded since the late 1950s.

Hall (1978) defines the language experience approach for teaching reading as a method in which instruction is built upon the use of reading materials created by writing the children's spoken language. He states that the student-created reading materials represent both the experiences and the language patterns of the learner, and that the four communication processes of listening, speaking, reading, and writing are integrated in the language arts and reading instruction. While language experience approach (LEA) is the most common name for instruction of this description, other terms, such as the language arts approach (LAA), or an integrated language arts program are often used.

The first large-scale American attempt to employ LEA as a strategy for teaching reading occurred in 1962 with the Reading Study Project, which included 12 elementary school districts in San Diego County, California. The general conclusion was that during the first 3 years of elementary school, LEA can be an effective way of teaching reading.

Kendrick and Bennett (1977) reported low socioeconomic LEA boys were superior to basal pupils in attitudes toward reading, while both sexes of LEA students were superior to basal pupils in the number of words used in compositions at the end of the first year. They found that at the end of the second year, all LEA pupils were superior in the total words used in speaking and that on standardized tests, low socioeconomic LEA pupils of both sexes were superior in science and social studies.

Spache (1976), in summarizing several studies, concluded that pupils taught by LEA are helped to grow in writing ability, in length of their compositions, and in spelling. He suggested the LEA pupils do develop broad informational backgrounds in science and social science by the end of their second and third years of training. He stated that development in word reading, paragraph reading, and vocabulary is at least as great as in basal programs.

In the wake of our continued educational growth, it is of interest to note that the number of studies which support a holistic approach to developing literacy are not limited to those presented here and that current studies (Calkins, 1983; Goodman, 1984; and Graves, 1983) support variations of the approach, and continue to provide additional information for designing effective school literacy programs. As educators, we need to build upon our successes with children, and to help children to develop positive attitudes toward reading. In doing so, we must outline programs of planned interventions which coordinate the communication skills.

**Elements of a Language Statement**

The emphasis in education must be on children and teachers. And with that resolve, this language statement is meant as a starting point from which to reflect. The statement suggests topics which each teacher should consider if he or she is interested in avoiding the globeheads. Those are planning, language connections, meaning-based instruction, peer teaching, risk taking, modeling, and communication networks.

1. Planning

Educators constantly make decisions and must be aware that even seemingly routine judgments can have far-reaching effects. Therefore, even though we cannot always predict the results of our decisions, we must plan. Teachers not only carry tremendous power to guide a child's education, but also possess the dangerous potential to misdirect and confuse--especially when unsure as to why an assignment has been selected.

We must know why students are doing an assignment; at least to ourselves we must be able to state clearly our aim or objective. We must know why a particular assignment is important to this child's education. Effective and appropriate objectives depend on a variety of factors, including student characteristics, the nature of the instructional task, the classroom, and the child's past experiences.

These statements do not mean that a teacher cannot have flexibility in planning. On the contrary, the teacher must retain the right to make changes in directions when indicated by student needs.

After identifying the aim, the next most critical decision to make is how the instruction will take place. Although there are many avenues of instruction, it is critical that we learn to use technology rather than being used by it. We must learn to choose textbooks, workbook pages, and dittos because they are essential to the growth of the child, not because they are there.

The central issue here is who is in charge of the classroom--the people within the classroom or the people who develop programs? What we need are classrooms where teachers and children, not programs, make decisions. Our instructional decisions must be based upon the close observations of children and their behaviors and supported by--but not dictated by--the directions in the teacher's edition.

Teachers must exercise independent judgment about whether it makes sense to use a program or to cover a concept with a particular child on a specific occasion. These decisions cannot be made in advance by individuals who have never seen the child. Textbook programs, workbooks, and dittos, like every other piece of technology, must be used with sensitivity and intelligence. This begins with planning.

2. Language Connections

Traditional language teaching--whether it is reading, writing, listening, or speaking--has focused instructional practice on small, explicitly teachable parts of language called subskills. Subskills are important, but only as they aid the student to communicate more effectively. However, many schools put so much emphasis on subskills that students never have a chance to develop language fluency, which is the object of communication.

Communication does not happen in isolation. It does not fall into neat categories of reading, writing, listening, and speaking which never overlap. In real life we use all of the communication processes to create and understand messages. Consequently, as decisionmakers, educators must value the connective and supportive relationships among listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

We can begin by surrounding students with communication in many forms, for many purposes, and for many audiences. We must expect students to use language, and we must create opportunities where

students can learn language actively, share language in real situations, work with language that is important to them, and explore language in low risk situations.

Learning does not come from one source, nor is it best learned from behind a desk, hands folded, feet flat on the floor, and eyes front. Before children enter school, they learn language actively by interacting with their environment. They use language purposefully to get things done. As educators, we must go back to the roots of learning, to use language to get things done. We must merge our traditional sense of schooling with the real world. What we do in school must not insult the children's past but must build upon that past and encourage future learning.

As teachers, we must allow children to play with language. We must learn how to motivate, to stimulate, and how to create interest. Students must actively participate in their own education, and we must provide them with numerous opportunities to learn how to accept this ownership.

First, we should set aside time for frequent use of literature, poetry, and drama. We should make time for improvisation, the acting out of favorite tales, readers' theater, and interpretation of stories through songs and dance. The classroom should be compatible with the child's natural environment: a place where there is constant language production, which begins with the personal and the expressive and moves outward to explore and expand the boundaries of the environment.

Second, we should teach students not only how to read but also how to love to read. We should read to students often and have students share and trade the books and stories that we and they write. We should allow students to explore many types of literature. Even if the students do not read anything more substantial than comic books, we can fuel the fire that excites them. Further, when reading material is selected for children, the materials must make sense to them and must be worth reading. They must concentrate on reading real books and not contrived stories that are more concerned with fitting into a reading formula than into the heart of a child.

Third, we should emphasize. Writing helps students to think; it provides an organization for their thoughts, and it helps them to find out what they know. Children know much; we must help them to discover this fact. Student work needs to be valued. We should publish it often by formal means and by providing opportunities for sharing with class members or adults.

The message and the mechanics are both important, but the mechanics should be in perspective, as clarifying and supporting the message. We must help students to value and to develop fluency first, and then to focus on clarity and correctness.

Children can understand the functions and general character of print long before they come into contact with the formal structure of the school. Many children begin playing with print even before they enter kindergarten. Although we may not recognize their writing as adult writing, we should encourage it from the first day. There is much more to education than crossing out, underlining, and circling. There is so much more to education than memorizing the alphabet, the colors, and the shapes. There is much more to communication than naming objects.

3. Meaning-Based Instruction

To quote from James Britton (1970), "Anyone who succeeded in outlawing talk in the classroom would have outlawed life." Language always occurs in some context. Children read, speak, listen, and write about something. They don't communicate in a vacuum. We should look for ways in which we can continue to integrate science and social studies into the language arts and not to separate learning into little compartments which cannot overlap. There is no room to add another subject. Therefore, the stress must be not on adding to the curriculum but on integrating into the curriculum.

Language teaching is the responsibility of all teachers, of all humans. Communication simply cannot be separated from any area of the curriculum, no matter how loudly some protest. Language learning can be facilitated by the secretary, the janitor, and the principal as well as by the science or the music teacher.

Let us begin where the children are. As Britton relates, " There can be no alternative in the initial stages to total acceptance of the language the children bring with them. We cannot afford to make a fresh start."

We can use the children's natural abilities to talk about their personal experiences as a foundation for moving outward into the more abstract processes of reading and writing. The classroom tasks and activities must be structured in a meaningful and interrelated manner. The classroom environment must be exciting and, perhaps, not always predictable. As in the real world, children must be given opportunities for exploring their environment--measuring, sampling, and using the language as a means of ordering what they see and hear.

Finally, the most effective content is the child, that which he brings to school as a part of his essence. The teacher can learn about the child, about what excites and concerns him. We must not allow the school to be an alien environment. Bernstein (1970) stated appropriately:

> If the culture of the teacher is to become part of the consciousness of the child, then the culture of the child must first be in the consciousness of the teacher....We should start knowing that the social experience the child already possesses is valid and significant, and that this social experience should be reflected back to him as being valid and significant.

We must not fear the language of the child, but we must use that language and support that language. When we support the child's native language and school language, quality will follow.

4. Peer Teaching

When students teach other students they both benefit; there is a direct improvement in self-concept, attitude toward school, and learning. According to Johnson, Johnson, and Maruyama (1984) after reviewing 122 North American studies, this improvement holds true for all grades and for all subjects, and for both heterogeneous and homogeneous groupings.

As parents, we know that children learn from each other and we also know the power and influence of peer associations. As adults, we continue to rely on one another to solve problems. We look to those who specialize in areas of business or in other areas of need. This is natural. It is time that students were taught how to learn from one another in the classroom.

We as teachers are not only overwhelmed by the size of the curriculum, but also by the number of students for whom we are responsible. We should take our direction from the teacher of the one-room school house. Let students teach each other!

5. Risk Taking

Risks are always acceptable when they are in the interest of improving education. Risk taking does not imply failure, but we must acknowledge that whenever we try a new experience, we always run the risk of making a mistake. If we as teachers view this mistake as a failure, then students may stop and tune out. As educators, we must realize that mistakes are to be accepted as opportunities of learning. We learn by making some mistakes along the way. Student errors are not sins but are a natural part of learning. We should recognize them as learning.

Peters and Waterman (1982) in their book, In Search of Excellence: Lessons from America's Best-Run Companies, spend a great deal of time discussing how the world's best companies actually encourage experimentation and support mistakes as natural outcomes. These are signals that employees are making decisions. Top companies actually go out of their way to provide a rich environment in which employees have the freedom to keep trying in spite of mistakes. Each mistake is valued not as a failure to be punished but as one more clue, an option that did not work.

Our job as teachers is to provide direction and then to help students to keep trying until they master the objective. Regardless of results, our basic aim is to keep students trying. Someone once said, "Never fear shadows. They simply mean that there's a light shining somewhere nearby."

6. Modeling

Students learn to read and write independently when they believe that processes are not just school assignments, but a worthwhile lifetime activity. Children need to see adults read and write. They need to see that adults can be excited about what they communicate. And yet, many teachers do not value reading to children, and many have not experienced trying to do those assignments which they expect of their children. If they did, they would see that it is not easy to write a story in 20 minutes that is worth reading, and that it is not easy to have something to say just because it is "journal time."

The old adage "actions speak louder than words" is as true in education as it is in the real world. We should spend time reading to the class what we write. Discussing our frustrations and strategies for overcoming difficulties will prove more powerful motivation than doing simple workbook pages.

7. Communication Networks

The world's most successful businesses know that strong formal and informal communication networks are extremely important to continued growth. Some companies value this communication network so strongly that they have actually reorganized their building floor plans to enhance all the possible communication patterns.

These companies know what we as educators are just now beginning to realize, that some of the best ideas for improving the company come from small groups of people who are on the firing line day after day. In order for these ideas to surface, communication must be open and encouraged. Many of the companies realize that sometimes formal channels of communication, like organizational charts, actually impede improvement and program development.

Schools and their staffs also benefit from these informal clusterings. Teachers need to get together and share their writing, quality programs, and practices. They need to share literature and poetry, and activities for all aspects of the curriculum, but most of all they need to talk about themselves and their frustrations. They need to develop an ownership in the mission of the school. They must see themselves as

having value within the system as an individual. A school that has a strong staff community network is a strong school.

**Conclusion**

All of the curriculum can be ours if we control it rather than let it control us. We are the decisionmakers in the classroom, and we must accept that control or run the risk of losing education as a process. If we are to promote effective language literacy, the teacher must first believe that the child is capable of language, must allow and expect participation, must be prepared to risk, must constantly expose the students to sounds and print, and must give them opportunities to test their own theories about language.

3

## OUT OF CONTROL

By Sigmund Boloz and Debbie Hickman

"Hello?...Principal's Office," I said, as I organized the desk top and prepared to record the interaction. "Yes, this is...he." Or was I supposed to have said "this is him?" I worried. "How can I help you?"

"That's okay, I have a few minutes now."

"Well, I'd be glad to send you a copy of some of our material, but...it's...just not that simple," I answered uncomfortably as my eyes catalogued the student writing, the articles, and the various programs of the GLAD Project which were prominently displayed on the office walls.

She should have asked to see my children's baby pictures, I thought. But then I realized that, like babies, writing projects grow up. Eager to learn, both enlarge so quickly. When they are 5, children and writing projects are fluid and have grown so complex that neither can be captured in a few words.

"Actually, we didn't begin with the idea of starting a writing project. Writing is a way of involving students in their own education," I continued, "and I simply wanted to support life in those classrooms."

She laughed. The statement must have struck a nerve.

"Look. The most helpful advice I can offer is for your staff not to look to outside programs as the total solution. I recommend you adapt and not adopt a program. Examine what your school already has and build on its strengths. Secondly, this thing we call the GLAD Project has grown to be too complex. It's alive and vibrant...and, to be completely honest, it's not even a writing project anymore."

"I know that sounds confusing, but it's more than a simple set of goals, objectives, or activities that we dropped into a primary school located on the Navajo reservation. It is a way of doing things...a way of getting things done. It's taking the process out of the writing and applying it to the total school. It's...well...it's something you just have to experience to understand."

"Yeah," I laughed nervously, "something like that. But sometimes it's even a label to hide our confusion, to give us...well...power, the power to follow our instincts or to flow with the children's excitement."

"I realize that you want to start something right away," I said seriously, "but I don't recommend walking into a school and preaching the writing process as salvation. That would kill the program before the staff had a chance to feel its power. We started with the handful of teachers who were already interested in promoting writing. By the end of that first year, we had infected enough staff members that the few turned into a school-wide writing project, and now...it's out of control."

"No," I laughed, "I'm not sure who's to blame. I'm not even sure where we lost our focus. All I am sure about is that our writing project is out of control..., and I couldn't be more delighted."

"I'll try," I answered, as I rubbed my forehead. "I know that it's a strange way to use the word, but it's accurate. Instead of telling teachers to encourage writing within their classes, we let them see the power in other persons' classrooms. When people are exposed to an infection, it silently envelopes them. For some staff it takes months, and for others...years," I continued.

"In our case, the GLAD Project is an infection which excites staff members and empowers them to believe in children and in their natural abilities as educators. As a result, teachers begin to do aberrant things, like talking to one another, entering each other's classrooms, and sharing ideas freely. They take risks, value meaning-based instruction, and become decisionmakers. And most importantly, they are not doing these things because someone ordered them to but, rather, because they have ownership in the program. They have become the program."

"Children are also infected," I added. "Whether they are from a mostly Navajo or a mostly English-speaking home, they actively participate in their own education and become comfortable with their limitations. They begin to see the connections between school learning and their own lives."

"Sure, it'd be a pleasure. If you're going to be in the area, I'd be happy to take you on a tour and to show you what I mean. Oh, but one last thing before you go. I almost forgot. I want to stress that we are still growing. Like all schools, we have our problems, our disasters, and although all of our ideas are not unique, it's important to realize that what makes them work is that we have a tremendous ownership of what's happening here. What makes us excited is that the GLAD Project was not planted by some outside 'expert'; rather, it has been shaped by our staff and our students."

As we bid each other a good day, I wondered if she understood the power of ownership.

**The Writing Seminar**

Although the sharing portion of our staff meeting is still called a writing seminar, the meetings are no longer limited to writing research and activities. The writing seminar, which typically covers the last 30 minutes of the 40-minute staff meeting, is a place to share our own writing and to read exceptional student trade (library) books. It is a place to speak about comprehension-based instruction, synthesis of the curriculum, or research concerning effective instruction. Last, the writing seminars are the responsibility of no one and everyone. Teachers, aides, and principals are encouraged and welcomed to share. The following is an example:

> Opening the writing seminar, Mrs. Swinger, a Transitional 1 teacher, reports on her students' Eagle Books. She describes the Language Experience Approach as she uses the tool in her classroom and explains how she "worked the story" for vocabulary and comprehension.
>
> Mrs. Stando then reads a piece called the "The Computer Wizard" that she has written about her second grade class. After a good laugh, and maybe a few tears of

relief, Mrs. Stando explains the motivation she had for writing the story about how her class was turned into a bunch of monkeys, and about how she was turned into a lion by her resident second-grade scientist.

Discussing the process her third graders had gone through to write, illustrate, and make clothbound books, Mrs. Beck distributes examples of student work and answers questions about using the Book Making Center equipment.

Holding up a few new titles, the principal discusses the books that are being added to the 500-volume professional library. He also shares an article which discusses research on the effectiveness of various approaches to spelling instruction.

Last, the school's librarian reminds teachers that she has additional copies of the books the students will have to read for the Karate Belt in Reading program. She requests staff members to turn in the names of students who have read the 20 books for the appropriate ribbon. These students, she continues, will be recognized at the next student council meeting.

The importance of the writing seminar is not the fact that a few teachers stand up and share an idea; rather, the writing seminar represents the power that the teachers have gained over themselves and over their educational decision making. These educators have created an environment where they are "staff" in the best sense of the word. They collaborate freely and are not afraid to take risks.

It is exciting to see teachers take charge of the curriculum, because then no method becomes the "right way" to teach. Although it is vital to be constantly alert to new research and developments in education, there is no longer a need to adopt a particular text or program.

Although the GLAD project has been defined as a writing project, it is the process of composing, more than the writing, that has given direction to the school. The risk taking, the sharing, the

reinforcement of someone's idea, and the acceptance of mistakes have become part of the general atmosphere of the school. Yet, transcending this kind of an atmosphere is the growing feeling that there is a creative potential among teachers that raises possibilities for themselves and, in turn, for their students.

As teachers see the possibilities and uniqueness in themselves, they can honestly look at children as unique and full of potential, too. When Mrs. Stando sees the power she has to produce genuine laughter and surprise in her colleagues over a story she has written, that influence spills over to the entire school.

**Morning Announcements**

The last morning bell rings. The students wait nervously, as many might if they are scheduled to meet with the principal. Moving about the main office uneasily, they continuously refer to the papers clutched in their small hands. Their heads raise in anticipation as they recognize his voice echoing up the main hallway.

Returning from the writing seminar that spring morning, the principal props the door open with his foot and half-enters the office area, still deep in discussion with Ms. Lochansky. He agrees to set up a writing seminar concerning integration and suggests it could be discussed at the GRIN meeting at Mrs. Johnson's home this Thursday.

Since some of the staff get together every other Thursday evening at what they call GRIN (Greater Reservation Interdisciplinary Network) meetings to share ideas informally, maybe they could offer some suggestions. Ms. Lochansky agrees, and as she walks back towards her class, a group of boys shove a paper into the principal's hand.

"Okay, this time, Brandon, but next time you'll have to wait your turn," the principal smiles. "And don't run," he yells down the hall after the five smiling boys.

Clutching the scrap of paper, he tosses his windbreaker across a chair, and in the same motion, turns his attention to the 12 waiting children.

"Sorry I'm late. Ready?" he questions as he walks over and turns on the intercom. "Good morning," he starts.

After a pause to allow the classes to become quiet, the announcements begin. "Good morning. Today's words are 'boa constrictor.' The words come from Brandon and Gary in Room 7."

"The jokes for today come from the third grade," he continues. "The first joke comes from Sharon in Room 12: Why does the headless horseman ride at night? The second joke comes from Harrison in Room 16: What do the White House and MacDonald's have in common"? He pauses and reads the jokes again. "I'll read their punch lines this afternoon. Don't forget to get your word lists in early enough so that I can read your names on the intercom before you go home." Teachers in several classes write the words of the day on the board and several children start listing words which use the letters of "boa constrictor."

"I am proud to announce that we had four third graders who earned a black belt in karate for reading 20 books from the fourth and fifth grade reading list. They are..." He reads the list and turns.

"We have 12 readers this morning," he announces, motioning the first child closer. Mickey, a second grader, steps to the mike. He reads his original story.

Kirby, who has read stories over the intercom several times this year, gives a short book talk without the use of any script. Important is the fact that many people consider Kirby a limited English speaker.

Anyone can sign up to recite a poem, sing a song, do a cheer, or even to read page one of the basal. And so they continue, four kindergarteners and six more second graders.

"Don't forget to sign up on the principal's office door if you would like to read," he says as he prepares to turn off the intercom. "Have a good day!"

As the student readers leave the office area, the principal follows. His pleased expression is evident to all. "Thanks for reading!"

**Natural Consequences**

As he follows the children into the hallway, a group of young girls catch the principal's attention. Huddling around the visitors' bench in front of the main office, the four first graders confer over the contents of the complaint form. Without noticing the principal, the young Navajos turn their attention to a girl at the office window who is also writing intensely. "How do you spell your name, Arlene?" one of the girls boldly asks from the safety of her huddle.

As the principal walks between the girls and into the conference room, a large smile erupts across his face. He laughs to himself but dares not laugh in front of the girls. For students, filling out the complaint form is taken very seriously.

Once in his office, the principal checks through the complaint forms left for him to handle. Mixed within the pile are several incident report forms (which are required to have been completed by the young mischief makers themselves) sent to the office by staff members.

Unfortunately, these mischievous primary students apparently hadn't read the handbook written by third graders concerning survival in Ganado Primary School. Caught in some act of misconduct, the handbook might have offered an appropriate excuse or a ready-to-order ploy for sympathy. Suffering such bad luck, however, the rule breakers would be doomed to at least the completion of the "I Apologize" form.

**Conclusion**

Some imagine that the education provided to Navajo students growing up on a reservation in Arizona is inferior. However, the students and staff members of this public primary school are active and excited about what education has become. Moreover, these Navajo students represent the tip of the iceberg.

Over the past 5 years, the GLAD Project has grown to be more than a set of delineated objectives or goals. The Project has evolved into a way of doing things, a way of getting things done. It is alive and

fluid, an idea whose existence can be credited to many people in varying degrees.

It is not enough to say that someone had a clever idea one day or that there were teachers working together. Although it may be true that good ideas and teachers working together produce quality products, the productive atmosphere lies in accepting and valuing the process as well as the product.

In the case of the GLAD Project, the process begins with the conditions for a creative climate where teachers' strengths are valued, risk taking is encouraged, and support is generously given. As teachers begin to realize that they can make a difference and that change is a possibility, an honest ownership of teaching begins.

It is in this climate, where teachers and students have the freedom to be wrong, that education is meaningful, and a person can expect support not only from the principal but from other staff. It is a climate that encourages staff and students to explore their own strengths. As teachers unravel the conflict between the way they think the schools are supposed to be and the way they would like them to be, they will begin to find their own voice in teaching. Looking for the surprises, choosing from many possibilities, sharing, revising, risk taking, and evaluating are not just characteristics of the writing process. They begin to permeate the entire teaching process when the writing project is out of control.

Sitting at my desk, my thoughts turn to the request on the other end of the telephone.

"Hello?... Principal's Office." I say as I organize the desk top and prepare to record the interaction. "Yes, this is...him," I report nervously (wondering if I should have said, "this is he"), "How can I help you?"

## THE FOUNDATIONS OF LANGUAGE LITERACY

By Geane R. Hanson and Joel D. Brown

Sharry was sure she simply did not know how to write her name the first day of kindergarten. When I pressed her, she explained confidently, "My mom writes my name for me 'cause I don't know my letters yet. I'm gonna learn 'em in school."

After a moment I asked her to pretend that she was her mother writing her own name. "You are so smart, Sharry, that I am sure you remember a lot of those letters!" I smiled.

She picked up a pencil and by the end of the day, Sharry had the firm beginnings for writing her own name without being directly instructed.

Example 1:
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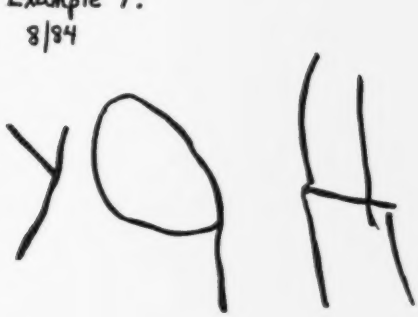

Example 2:
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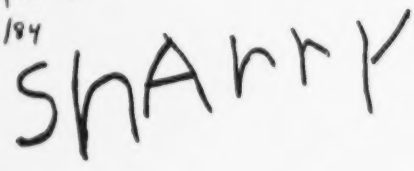



Indeed, Sharry succeeded because she was directly involved with something that was meaningful to her, and she came to school with a wealth of information and experience concerning both oral and written forms of language.

One of our major responsibilities, then, is to become more aware of what the young child knows, given the context of her individual life experiences. Some questions to guide us might be: Who are the closest people to the child? How does she feel about them? About herself? What things does she like to do? To eat? Or, as Sharry's example forces us to wonder: How far has she gone in mastering the more formal conventions of language? Once we discover answers to these questions, we may be able to more capably guide the child to build upon what she knows as she develops in her growing interaction with the world.

At the heart of such a program is a sincere and trusting interaction between teacher and child. Through this interaction we make use of what we observe and learn from the child. For example, in the earliest language learning experiences a child is an active participant in his learning process. He does not learn language by being "told," or by being directly instructed. He listens and observes. We can learn to listen and observe as well.

"Bush on you, teacher!" Elfonso says. "Bush on you!"

Only with some acute observation, followed by interaction, does his teacher reach the realization of his meaning. "Oh, you mean I'm bushed!" she smiles. "How right you are, Elfonso."

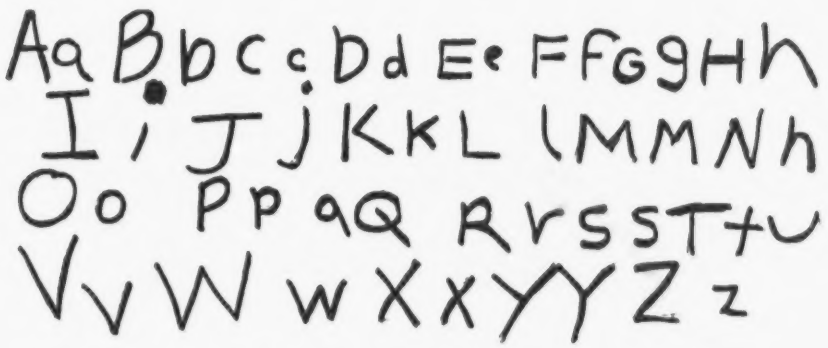
Adults guess and repeat the child's words in conventional form because that form is the answer to the implicit question, "What was that he said?" Elfonso, being a good listener, naturally makes his communication more standard and understandable minutes later as he comments to a classmate, "Teacher bushed, huh?"

A child learns because he is involved. He wants to communicate something and communicate efficiently. It is this need to communicate we must expound upon. As teachers we must give young experimenters with the language a meaningful and safe environment to discover how to communicate effectively with others.

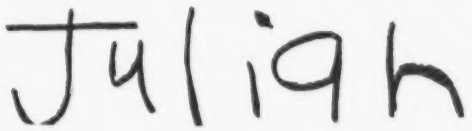
Teachers, as active learners themselves, must strive to create an environment which is interactively rich, varied, and worthy of exploration by their students. Real and meaningful situations which support and extend the whole life context of the child must be explored

and created. In this we should not overlook the obvious such as a child's family, favorite foods, recipes for making things in science, science-related experiences, and the child's simple telling of a story. The classroom must become the world itself. Creating this world is the ultimate challenge and reward for a teacher.

Every child is a knowledgeable participant in his own language learning process. Therefore, nothing regarding the various forms of literacy should be kept from a child. Integration is the child's work to do and the teacher's job to support. The units of language need not be taken apart or presented out of context, although this may be done for fun, to illustrate a discovery, or to explore a question raised. The child who is ready will learn the alphabet through his interaction with print.

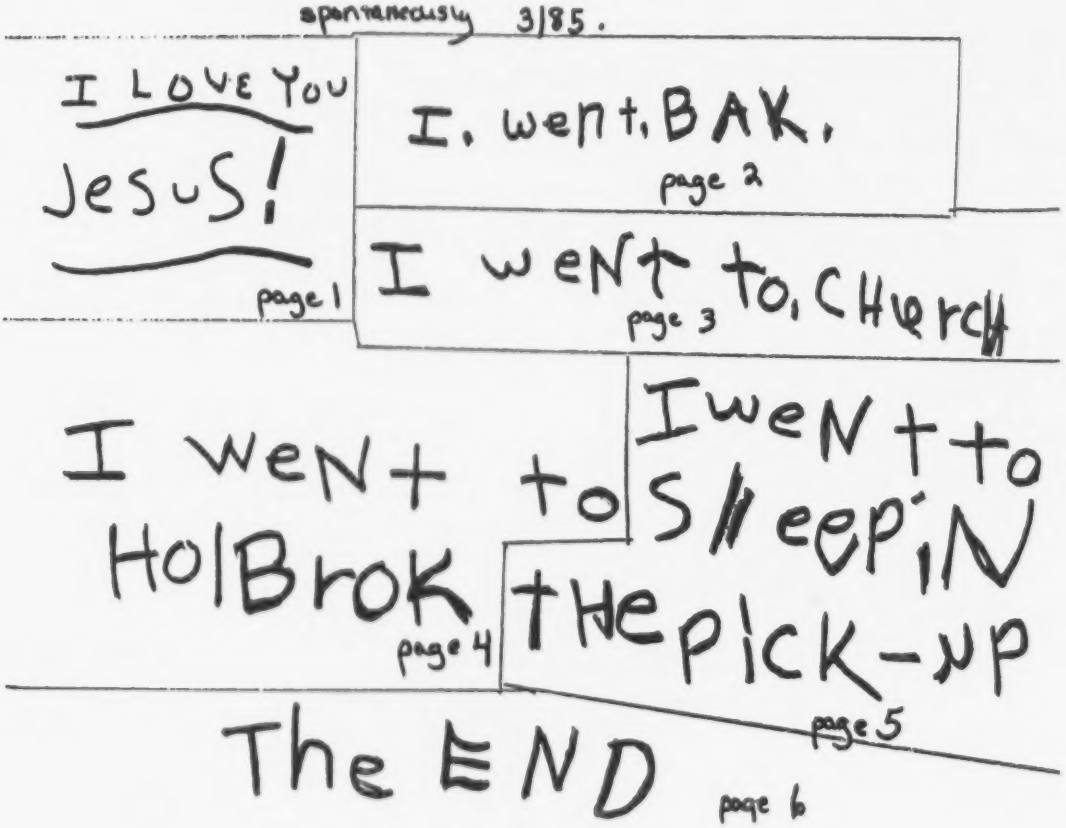


Example 3: Spontaneous Alphabet writing 11/84



"S" can truly mean Sharry, but it is better with an "h" after it if her classmate Samuel is also present. This means children should be constantly exposed to print that is important and exciting to them in its many and varied forms.

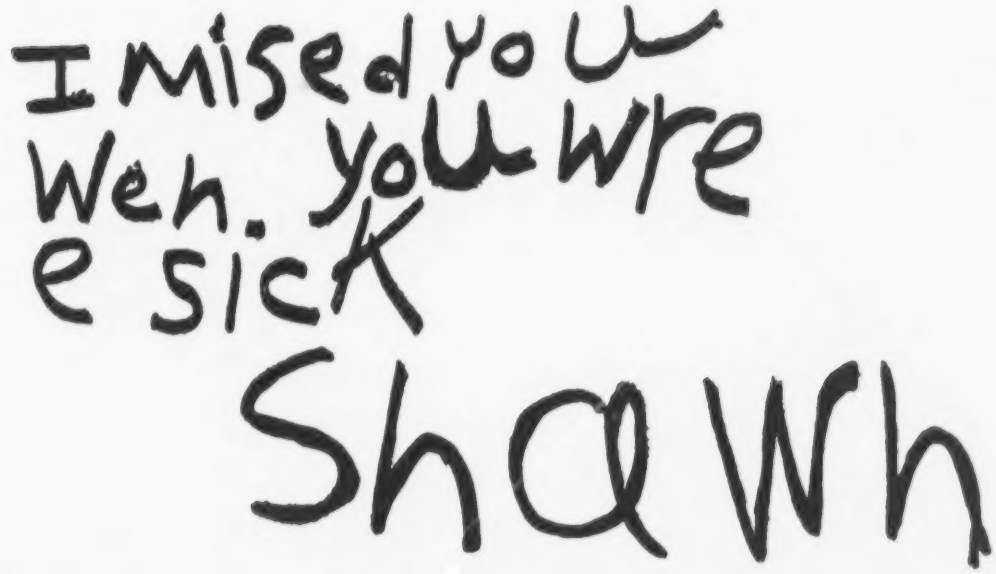
There are many avenues to involve a child with print, as any child will readily inform the patient, interested, and interactive adult. Class-generated stories are a great resource. These can be typed by the teacher and illustrated by the children through drawing on a ditto to be run off for the entire class or by using magazine cut-out pictures. These stories are then put into book form.



It is exciting for the children to take these familiar stories home and successfully share them with interested adults and siblings. Individually created stories will evolve naturally from this point, with children's growing involvement and awareness of the print they encounter.

Because interaction per se is so important to the active learner, older students are a valuable resource for assisting the young child. In my kindergarten classroom, two second graders came in daily for 45 minutes to help me, to talk to the children, and often to write down their dictated stories. The kindergarteners were exposed to more sophisticated language use as these more experienced learners provided them with inspiration and example. Interaction increases, and as the kindergarteners began to write, a very meaningful sense of audience developed.

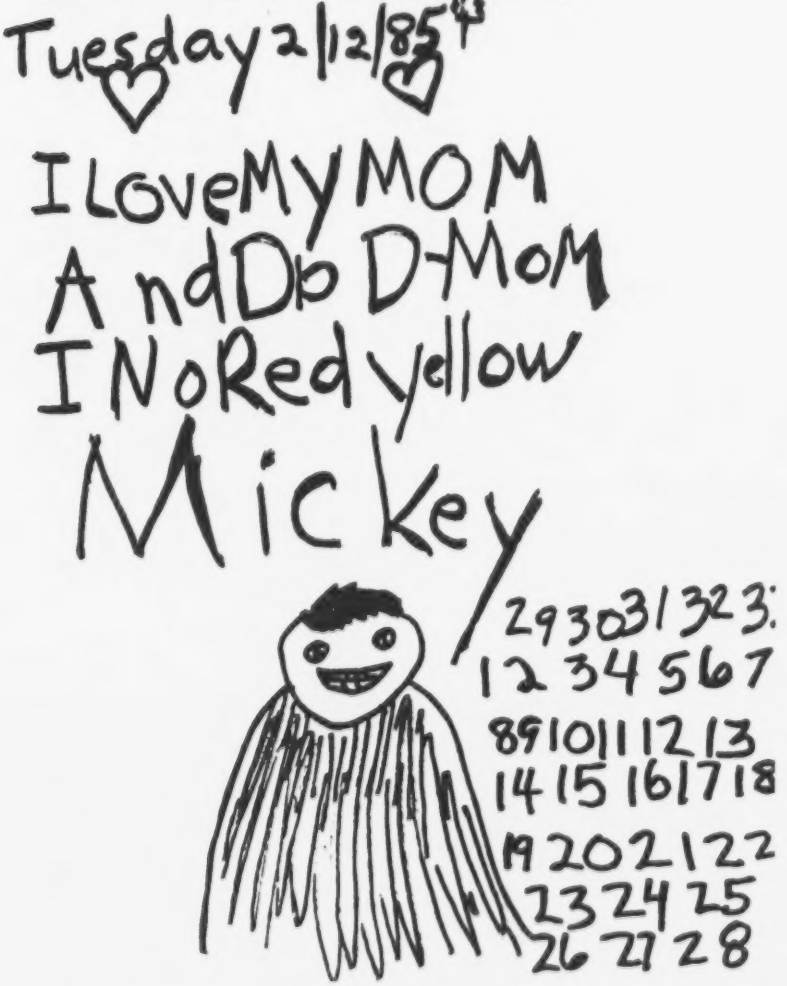
In my own classroom at midyear, we decided to make mail envelopes for various significant adults in our daily school experience. Letters were written out of the spontaneous interest of the students, and sometimes were written to adults whose names came up in class discussions. This was so successful that soon all of us made a mail envelope for ourselves. Using materials from the writing corner, we wrote letters and answers to each other.



Spontaneous letter writing puts the students in touch with the need to develop more conventional practices in their writing. It is also very motivational. After all, when your teacher, principal, or other significant adult answers your letter, what better reason is there to write another? Everyone loves getting mail.

Other projects teachers may develop to enhance the print environment include the use of a variety of types of journal writing: daily (personal), scientific, topical (favorite things), etc.

Example 5: Journal Writing



Journals give the child collections of his own work upon which he can expand and build. They are something from which the child can begin to gain a sense of his own progress, and they offer the teacher a source for questions appropriate to the child's development.

The possibilities are as endless as the teacher may construct and the students discover a "Writing Corner" in the room. In this area all the class writing efforts, as well as some individual contributions, can be stored on rings and chart paper for easy review. Many choices of paper, writing instruments, and literacy oriented materials can be made available here. Changes in the materials should be made regularly, so the young child can be constantly challenged and given reason to remain curious.

A reading corner is also appropriate for the early grades and needs to have many types of print available in it, from comic books to classics, from highly predictable books that provide instant success to books where children may simply look and recognize a word or two. To begin the first day of school with an instantly successful reading experience is easily achieved and critically important. The Bill Martin books are predictable and a terrific resource for this. The students can read/sing the words they are learning. Once this confidence is formed, there is literally nothing they cannot do. There is excitement because the experience is a complete and meaningful encounter with print.

As the stories become more complicated and new books are approached, children will naturally read the pictures to obtain cues for understanding the story. It is not fair to underchallenge young learners because of our own lack of information or to keep them from material which may be exciting, even though it may be deemed inappropriate for their level. Jason, a long time day care and pre-school veteran, wisely gives us our motivation to extend ourselves beyond what is traditionally thought to be the kindergarten with his question early in the year, "I already know how to count to 100 and say my letters, so can we do other stuff, too?" As the child comes to school ready to meet the challenge, so must we be willing to challenge and be challenged.

All of this, of course, can be embellished easily. In support of literacy, other areas of my classroom include many and varied musical selections which children may listen to with headphones. This process consolidates their language experiences in the classroom. Several tape recorders are available to use for recording and listening. Other media include a slide viewer, a filmstrip viewer, and a film-loop viewer.

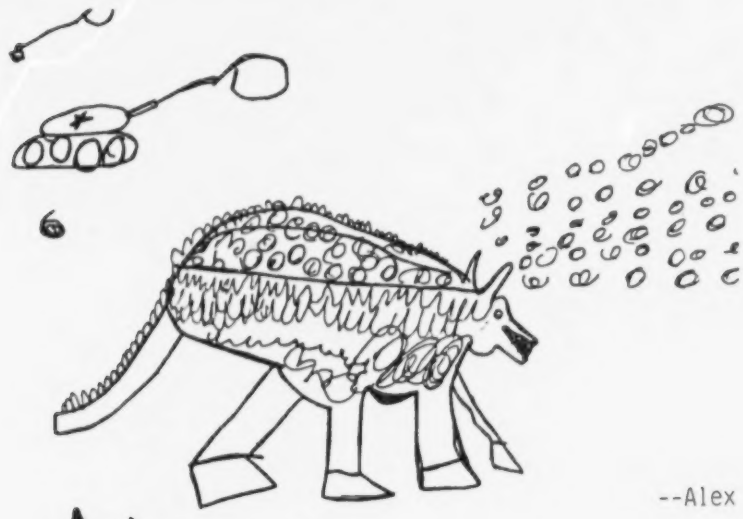
In this world students and teachers participate in a multitude of learning experiences. An awareness of and an understanding and respect for these seemingly magical events in children's developmental learning processes are at the heart of opening the world to their eagerness. Children evolve language proficiency naturally in a supportive, meaningful, and positive atmosphere. There is no "standard child" or "standard instruction." If we understand and work with this in mind, we can be unique. And that is dynamic!

**OPENING THE DOOR: KINDERGARTENERS CAN WRITE**

by Sigmund Boloz and Diana Jenness

"Teacher! Teacher! It's my turn," said Michael for the fifth time in 2 minutes. "I have a word to write down!"

"How do you spell dinosaur?" asked Alex. "Oh, I know, say the word slower, dn...or...sr...ns...," as he spells the word in his story.



--Alex

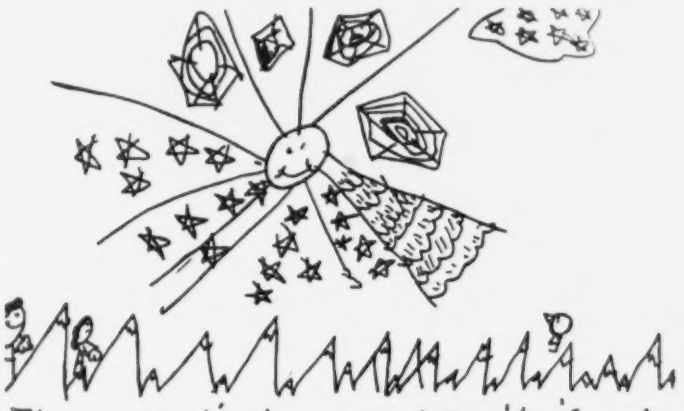
Alex

The Dnorsrns is mad at the tigr. the tigr is mad.

The dinosaur is mad at the tiger. The tiger is mad.

The atmosphere in the room is electric. The children are busy interacting with one another, writing labels, sentences, and stories, or conferencing with the teacher. Some of the writers are reading their compositions to the aide. Certainly this scene is typical of many classrooms where writing is a necessary component in the development of language literacy. However, these students are in kindergarten, and most are Navajo.

Tara writes:



The sun is siing in miy Eyes it is verie nis i tic that it is verie verie nis its hs tining are all ovr the sun bekrusons it is nis i'ming verè nis Wyiy dot you dot tik that the sun is verie nis Wel look at it and you Wel see Wel it tek that it is nis Wel it is vèrie nis i do to we are fres naw naw you see naw i Wele tik that it is veris nis Wel me to We love etutr yes wi sd tik tut that it is nis the enD

The sun is shining in my eyes. It is very nice. I think that it is very, very nice. It has things all over the sun because it is nice. It moving very nice, why don't you think that the sun is very nice? Well, look at it and you will see. Well, I think that it is nice. Well, it is very nice. I do too. We are friends now. Now you see how I will think that it is very nice. Well, me too. We love each other. Yes, I should think that it is nice.

The End

Although this K-3 public school houses a school-wide language literacy project, during the first 2 years of the Project the kindergarten children were not expected to be able to write freely and expressively. The students were expected to sound out and read some regularly phonetic words and copy sentences. However, they were not actually expected to write whole sentences and stories using their own spelling. To paraphrase Holbrook (1981), it was quite possible that our teachers weren't so much not teaching writing, as they were simply overlooking the fact that some of the children already could write.

**Getting Started**

With the assistance of 1 third grade class, we had the 27 journals which we needed to begin. It had been the third graders' class project to prepare the 30-page journals. Although the kindergarten students didn't really know what to make of the booklets on that first day, they were delighted with the presents.

During that first week of daily journal time, our purpose was to establish a low-risk classroom environment in which children could have numerous, successful experiences and could view writing positively and purposefully. In beginning this process, therefore, we asked the students what words they would like to write. We wrote the words on the blackboard, and the students copied them. When completed, the students came up and read the journal entries to an adult. During this writing time, the students also had the option to copy any words from around the room or anyone else's words.

On the third day Kathy asked, "Is it okay if I write my sisters' names?" We were prepared to write the names, and we asked which one she wanted written first. "That's okay," she answered. "I already know how to write their names."

Through a natural, meaningful interaction with her environment, this young girl had learned to spell the names of significant others. In addition, we found that she could already spell "dad," "mom," "I love you," and several other words and phrases for which she had had little use thus far in school.

We began with the premise that kindergarten children could learn to write expressively if we would only provide the right environment. How

could we blame Kathy for stealing our thunder? She had no way of knowing that kindergarten students were not supposed to know how to write words yet!

We were delighted to realize that other students also had untapped resources. Many of these young children could write the names of family members. In addition, we found that some could also write the names of colors, of fast food stores, of high frequency foods and beverages, and even of some television characters. However, it seems tragic that many similar children might never participate as fully in their own education as these children, and that their hidden resources could remain untapped. They could remain chained to learning the alphabet in the name of education.

Most students knew that marks on paper carry meaning and that the form of writing has certain properties. It is quite possible that many young authors have had years of home experiences at imitating writing, at scribbling, and at inventing their own stories. Unfortunately, this rich enthusiasm and readiness for real writing is traditionally lost, not because we expect too much, but because in education we often settle for too little.

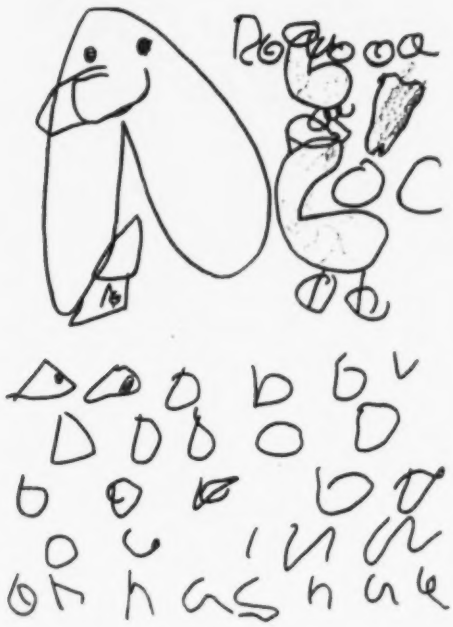
**Writing and Inventive Spelling**

Progressing into the second week of journals, some of the students began wanting to express phrases and simple sentences. Building on the special interest of these few, we introduced the concept of a sentence. For some students, this strange concept was explained in Navajo. While it is important to stress that not all students were ready to write sentences, some did excel.

Students grow from their successes and from taking greater risks, and so do teachers! As a result of student progress, an inservice on inventive spelling, and the reliance of the students on teachers as walking dictionaries, the kindergarten writing program took a significant turn. The kindergarten students were now expected to experiment with their own inventive spelling. Given large sheets of "story paper," the students were asked to draw pictures and to write stories about them. If they came to a word they didn't know how to spell, they were encouraged to listen for the sounds in the word and write them down. Some could do this, and others required extra help.

When they were finished, they would "read " the story to an adult within the classroom, and the work would be posted. On other occasions, the teacher translated the child's writing into adult writing and displayed both. As a final class project, selected stories of each child were combined and published as a 74-page volume by the school's writing project.

Because of our expectations that the students would accept responsibility for their spelling and writing, the children gained confidence in their own ability to express themselves. The quality of the children's work varied because of several factors: language sophistication, ability to speak English, maturity, and knowledge of letter sounds. For instance, although David was developmentally about 2 years behind the rest of the class, he was able to put random "letters" in rows under his drawing and to tell what the "words" said.



Pac-Man

Some children had already obtained a good phonetic background; they were working ahead of the class and actually wrote full pages. When told that it was okay to write smaller, Kathy (for example) wrote even more.

Tes is a valentinem haos Tes is a vere nice Valentinem haos Sudbe is Kumeing to my haos the dod is fliy I Lik tat Prson tut-is Kming to my house tes poson i now tes poson tus gooing to my house har nam is rosie

This is a valentine house.
This is a very nice valentine house.
Somebody is coming to my house.
The bird is flying.
I like that person that is coming to my house. This person I know.
This person is going to my house.
Her name is Rosie.

**Early Stages of Writing Growth**

Writing, as it develops naturally outside of schools, does not begin with the understanding of the alphabetic principle. Rather, early writings demonstrate attempts to establish order. The following developmental sequence appears to be representative. The child:

1. develops theories about the relationship between meaning and written language as he mimics writing activities in his environment and watches the interactions between significant others with print.

2. develops the concept that writing has predictable traits. There are common recurring shapes that are linear and directional.

3. attaches meaning to print. The print may be scribbling, a single letter, or a combination of both, but it is obvious that the child understands that words are built out of letters.

4. develops labels and inventories. These inventories are words that are significant to the child and relate to a particular topic, (e.g., names of family members, color words, etc.).

5. expresses content in single words and phrases. The child may use one or more words to carry the meaning of a sentence or a story.

**Room 20**

Inspired by the success of Mrs. Jenness' kindergarten class, we realized the potential of the kindergarten student. We found that many Navajo children entered kindergarten expecting to write, and that when this desire was nurtured, students confirmed our expectations.

A February flurry whirled into our environment as I approached the room. Traveler's advisories were out that day for our area. Not a normal day to begin an exciting journey, I thought. Teaching kindergarteners still scared me, but Mrs. Williams was there in case I got myself

into trouble. She was interested in exploring expressive writing, and I offered my time, a few ideas, and the apprehension which everyone must bring to kindergarten.

Since the students had had little opportunity to write expressively, we structured the environment so that the children would write. Mrs. Williams and I had conferenced earlier and had agreed to begin with a breakfast cereal theme. The students were familiar with cereals and the theme lent itself to multisensory experiences. We selected Trix, which was particularly colorful.

To heighten interest and to promote dialogue, we presented the Trix concealed in a paper sack. As they considered what I had brought, various kindergarteners took turns shaking, holding, and testing the shape and weight of the bag's contents.

After we listed their speculations on the board, the children opened the bag and scrutinized the words and pictures on the box. Students explained where they had seen Trix and what kinds of foods they had eaten for breakfast. After the box was opened, everyone was given a handful of cereal to examine and taste. Children described what the cereal reminded them of, what other foods it tasted like, and whether they liked it. All this time, the teacher and I made word lists and reviewed them frequently with the students.

Gathering in a circle on the rug, the class examined the sensory experiences and shared personal experiences. One of the staff then captured several sentences of the children's natural language on large chart paper. After group readings of the sentences, volunteers also read. We underlined key words and worked the story again.

The students returned to their seats and opened their journals. We passed out the rest of the cereal, and as the children ate, they wrote words. When finished, they read to Mrs. Williams, to the aide, to me, or to a classmate.

Oral language activities always preceded the LEA charts and journals. For 10 days a new cereal was brought in each day, and the emptied box was later posted with the language experience chart. Although each cereal box differed in contents, because of the cereal

theme common language and concepts were stressed and reviewed on a daily basis. Discussions of the colors, shapes, textures, and even designs on the boxes helped to develop the children's vocabulary. For instance, one day we learned the word "crunch," and everyone practiced making the loudest crunch.

**Language Experience**

Our first language experience stories were five to six sentences in length. However, we found that limiting stories to three sentences enhanced the students learning of the words and that color coding each sentence differently enabled students to follow sentences on the charts.

Words flowed. The students acquired words faster than we had anticipated. The trend continued, and the students gained confidence. They even asked to read additional charts. We were encouraged but still not sure if the students were reading or were simply memorizing the charts.

To insure reading rather than story memorization, the students were asked to read in a variety of ways. In addition to reading the sentences in story order, the students read the words in the story in a reverse or random order. For instance, students read the words down the right side of the page, or every fourth word.

The children's interest in reading and their ability to read increased as the story was used. Each morning we read previous stories, and each time the reading was more efficient.

Reading was no longer isolated as a subject with one block of time. Mrs. Williams used the story vocabulary throughout the day. Students used salt boxes, played "Go Fish," practiced spelling lists, completed sentence slotting exercises, and read words posted around the room.

Mrs. Williams read to the students often. The class regularly went to the library, took out books, and looked for words they knew. This use of real books promoted some students to make the connection between LEA stories, journals, and trade books. This became clear when Arlinda caught me in the lunchroom and stated, "Mr. Boloz, we are learning how to read now!"

**Journals**

After a new language experience story was written, the students wrote in their journals. It was through journals that the students were given ownership and complete control over the contents of their work. Although we provided the cereal theme as a stimulus, the students were free to write about anything that came to mind.

From the work in Mrs. Jenness' room (Boloz and Jenness, 1984), we had recognized the potential of the child's writing and that each student comes to school with a unique background and variety of experiences. In Room 20, we were reminded that children come to school as individuals and that they must be provided opportunities to unlock the power of their minds.

As with our earlier experiences in Mrs. Jenness' room, on the third day the students began to take risks and to use known words. For instance, as Claudia read her journal entry from day three to me, on the bottom of her page were written the words "Go No Stop." Since these held no relationship to previous words used in class, I asked Claudia where she had found those words. I thought she had copied them from somewhere in the room, but she replied, "I already know it in my mind."

As Mrs. Williams and I discussed with Claudia her first sign of independent language, Amos leaned into the conversation and assessed the situation. "That's chicken! I know more words then that," he boasted defiantly. He proceeded to write known words, and other students followed. Soon we had enthusiastic children scampering about the room sharing their personal entries with each other.

At first students copied or wrote isolated words or short word lists, and we encouraged inventive spelling. However, as we worked toward the concept of a sentence, we were impressed by the power of "I" and the power of "love," "like," and "hate."

We introduced the students to simple sentence slotting activities with "I like..." or "I love...." It had never occurred to us that during the 6 previous months of school, no one in the class had made the connection between the letter "i" and the word "I." Nevertheless, now that they were actively involved in their own education, they had finally made meaningful language connections between speech and the

printed word. The significance of the word "I," coupled with other "power words" ("love," "like," and "hate"), had notably increased the students' control over written language.

Later, the students connected these "power words" with "safe words" and "safe phrases." Safe words were those most frequently seen or used during the thematic unit, like "cereal" and "milk," and were learned quickly because of their frequent use.

No matter what motivational activity we used, students continuously surprised us. There were always students who wrote what they wished and not always what we anticipated. For instance, when we taught the word "hate," we expected the children to write about the cereals which they hated. Instead, we started a whole new avenue of "I hate girls." These comments led one boy to ask for words like "honeymoon," and "water bed," which he wrote in his journal almost daily. This caused Roderick to ask, "Mr. Boloz, why are you writing those nasty words on the board?"

**Subskills**

We presented language conventions as they became useful. Although our main focus was on developing each child's ability to communicate, we found many opportunities to teach subskills when they were important to the message. For instance, we taught the concept of sentence by coloring each sentence a different color. The students learned that a sentence can occupy more than one line and, as a result, they also learned to follow line order. For instance, Claudia defined a sentence as "a bunch of words that made a short story."

From our first opportunity to introduce the concept of sentence, we wrote words from the thematic unit on sentence strips, cut the words apart, and students arranged the cards in acceptable sequences. Each day students discussed periods and capital letters as a natural part of a written message and not as an assignment in a workbook. They learned to use the same conventions in their journals.

Our final cereal, Smurfberry Crunch, led to a unit about Smurfs. In the process of reading and retelling Smurf adventures, the students learned the importance of exclamation marks with Papa Smurf, Harmony Smurf, and Smurfette. The students soon became proficient at picking out and using periods and exclamation marks, and they read the

exclamations with enthusiasm. The students used the proper terms and read with inflection because they had seen how punctuation enhanced the meaning of a sentence. The possibilities for teaching language conventions were endless, but more importantly, each theme provided opportunities for expanding on real content.

Since it was not our aim to develop a research study, it is difficult to measure the full impact of the use of these children's natural language and interests upon skill development in the kindergarten. However, it was obvious to us that there was a tremendous amount of language learning taking place.

**The Teacher's Role**

Regardless of whether the student is a native English or Navajo speaker, to promote language proficiency among kindergarten students the teacher must first believe that the child is capable of developing language. Second, the teacher must believe in the power of the child and allow and expect his or her participation. Third, the teacher must be prepared to risk. Last, the teacher must constantly expose his or her students to real communication and must give children numerous opportunities to test their own theories about language. In addition, the students in this program participated in the following language activities:

1. We read to the kindergarten students regularly. We discussed parts of the story, the characters, events, and alternative outcomes. We read several books by one particular author, and discussed the author's style of writing and the illustrations. For example, emphasizing Dr. Seuss, we discussed rhyming words and strange characters.

2. Children were encouraged to draw pictures, to paint, and to work with clay. We then discussed the objects with the young artists. We tried to get the students to tell a short story; however, since some students were limited English speakers, they might only name objects of the pictures.

3. Children kept journals of favorite words. Each day there would be a new category of words that the children would suggest and copy.

4. We taught a few basic sight words, such as names of colors, their own names along with those of their classmates, and words to label things around the room.

5. Students memorized short poems and nursery rhymes.

6. We developed language experience stories cooperatively. The children supplied the words and helped with the spelling as the teacher wrote them down.

**Conclusion**

Like other students around the country, many Navajo children also enter kindergarten that first day with the anticipation that they will learn to read and write. All have been exposed to or surrounded by the structure and function of language. Many have had years of play with pencil, pen, or crayons, and have developed strong theories about what language does and how it is formed. Most have also learned to spell words that carry significance in their life. The time has come to raise our expectations for all students, and to let the sun shine in their eyes. In the immortal words of Kathy, " Why don't you think the sun is very nice? Well, look at it and you will see."

# 6

## FIRST GRADE

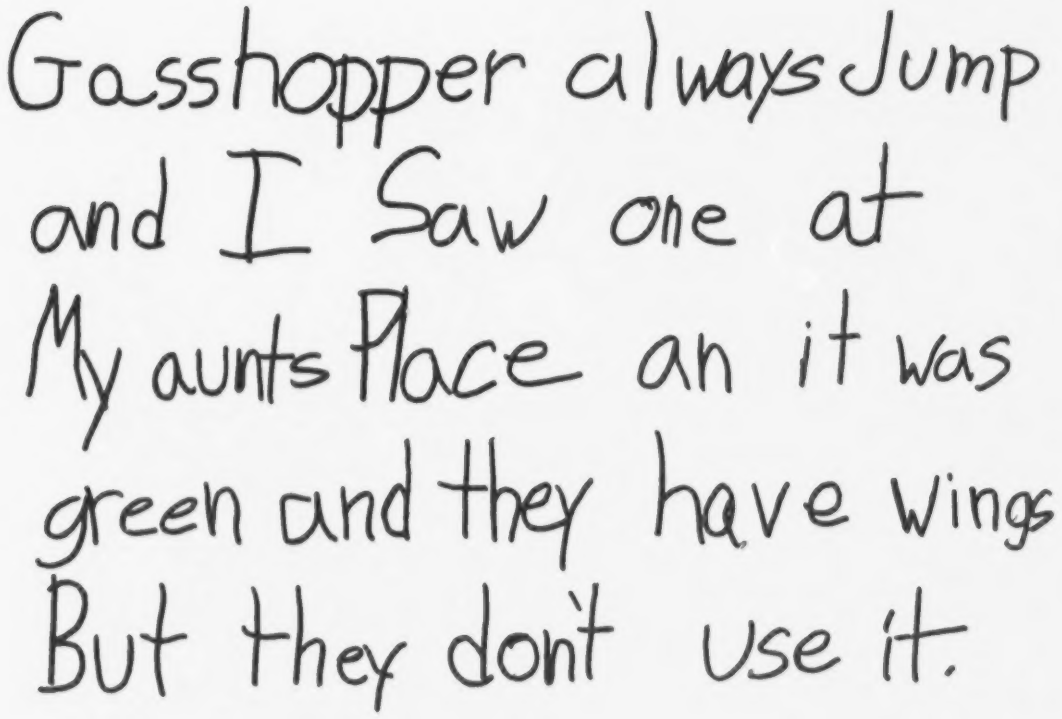
by Sigmund Boloz and Patricia Loughrin

"On the first day of school, I begin the students on their first written assignment. You can tell who has been doing the most writing the year before, because they don't give me those blank looks," stated first grade teacher Shirley Kanuho.

Traditionally, first grade has been the year in which one might expect to see beginning reading and writing. However, as we have demonstrated in the previous chapters, even kindergarteners can read and write when their early attempts are valued as meaningful by the adults around them.

As with kindergarteners, first graders should be expected to write from the first day. As Miss Kanuho explains:

> When a child enters my classroom for the first time, I do some informal activities to check the child's familiarity with the language. At that time, I introduce the students to a class word dictionary.
>
> This simple, dittoed dictionary contains basic sight words organized around 26 pages. Each page is labeled with a letter of the alphabet and contains those high frequency words which I have learned that first graders want to use most often.
>
> After I explain the dictionary and how it can be used, I tell students that each will have their own and can use it to find words that they can't spell. If a student does not know how to spell a needed word, then I ask that he come to me with the dictionary open to the letter that he thinks the word begins with. If the word is not on the page, then I write the word on the appropriate page.




Although Miss Kanuho has structured an environment for experimentation with writing, the important variable here seems to be expecting the students to use immediately and consistently what they are learning. Miss Kanuho begins her students with class dictionaries. However, it is also important to note that all first grade teachers do not approach early literacy the same way.

While many do use the classroom dictionary as an aid, some use variations of the format used by Miss Kanuho. A few have used a simple booklet with a letter of the alphabet on the top of each page. Beginning with these booklets, students write in words which they have

collected as most useful to them in their writing, or that the teacher has written for them as they have needed them. Other teachers have begun their classes with basic word lists organized into alphabetical clusters to which additional words can be added.

There are still other teachers who have been successful in relying totally on the child's invented spelling and have refused to spell for the child. Although some have found this departure from "the teacher as resource" frightening those who have ascribed to this technique have been pleased with the long-range results.

The following is an example of invented spelling:

--Valerie

The lady came home and nobody was home and she did not have the keys. She could not get in. She is going to see if it is going to rain. It is not going to rain. I am happy.

Inventive spelling appears not to interfere with correct spelling in later grades. Upper primary teachers have noted little difference in spelling ability between those who used inventive spelling earlier in their academic training and those who did not. However, whether using the dictionaries or inventing their own spellings, these students appear to be more eager to write than those not exposed to either approach. The freedom to experiment needs to be genuinely supported.

Although we allow teachers to value either approach, in the early grades the emphasis in all the classrooms is on fluency and not on correctness. Miss Kanuho explains:

> In the approach I use, I find that spelling is not an issue that interferes with fluency. The child becomes comfortable with the dictionaries and can find words as they need them. However, when the children are first exposed to writing, grammatical correction is not stressed. As time passes, grammatical rules are introduced as the child needs them. At first I try to make the children feel comfortable and safe in expressing their ideas. I encourage more correction in their final compositions. But even in the final draft, I am not overly concerned with those skills which have not been taught.

Lucia

I saw a butterfly in my garden. It was so pretty. I said to my sister, come here Cara and She said, Okay What is it? Can you see that butterfly? Yes it looks pretty. I Konw. Then my sister said, to my brother come here Eric. Okay now What is it you see? That butterfly. yes it looks pretty. I Know. The End

Although young children are creative and flexible, they cannot be expected to write about experiences they have never had. American Indian children do come from environments which can offer subjects for writing. Also, teachers must expose the children to a rich source of experiences through which the structure, flexibility, and the vocabulary of the English language become evident. In other words, the teacher must structure numerous formal and informal opportunities for children to play with language.

We are not suggesting forcing a second language upon children, but rather making language as naturally accessible to the child in as many real situations as possible. Students must be allowed to gain control over language. Language must become not a barrier, but a tool for making meaning.

Under this system, students would be read to often by as many adults and other children as possible. There would be a rich classroom mixture of the theater and visual arts. Students would be involved in learning language across the curriculum, and they would have opportunities to create language.

Teachers would be facilitators of language. They would be taking story dictation and, with the help of students, creating word lists of everything. As language facilitator, the teacher's job would be to find ways to inspire and not to coerce.

One rich source of inspiration for young children are pattern stories and rhymes. When given the opportunity, children seem to memorize these rhymes quickly. For first graders, a good introduction to this type of language is to have students reconstruct a pattern or predictable story. Instead of always coming up with a new story or poem in class, have the students rewrite the pattern story or poem as a class, keeping the same rhythmic pattern of the original. Examples can be found on the following page:

"Over in Ganado"

adapted from the poem, "Over in the Meadow"

by Mrs. Parsa's First Grade

Over in Ganado
Where the children run,
Stands a football field
And its team number one.

Over in Ganado
Where the garage is new,
Stands a big yellow bus
And its little busses two.

Over in Ganado
Where there was a tree,
Lay a big pine cone
And its pinons three.

Over in Ganado
Where we go to the store,
We buy groceries
From the food groups four.

Over in Ganado
Where the people are alive,
Stands the round Ganado Lake
And its black catfish five.

Over in Ganado
Where the school everyone picks,
There stands a playground
And its nice swings six.

Over in Ganado
Where the trees reach to heaven,
Are some brown corrals
And the running horses seven.

Over in Ganado
By the new office gate,
Pass all the playing children
And their duty teachers eight.

Over in Ganado
Where the weather is fine,
Smiles the shiny yellow sun
And its puffy clouds nine.

Over in Ganado
Where teachers, both ladies and men,
Teach us reading and writing
And put the school in the top ten.

"Let's Pretend"

by Mr. Thompson's First Grade Class

Bonnie is a bug
Crawling on the ground,
Looking for some food
She found some and sat down.

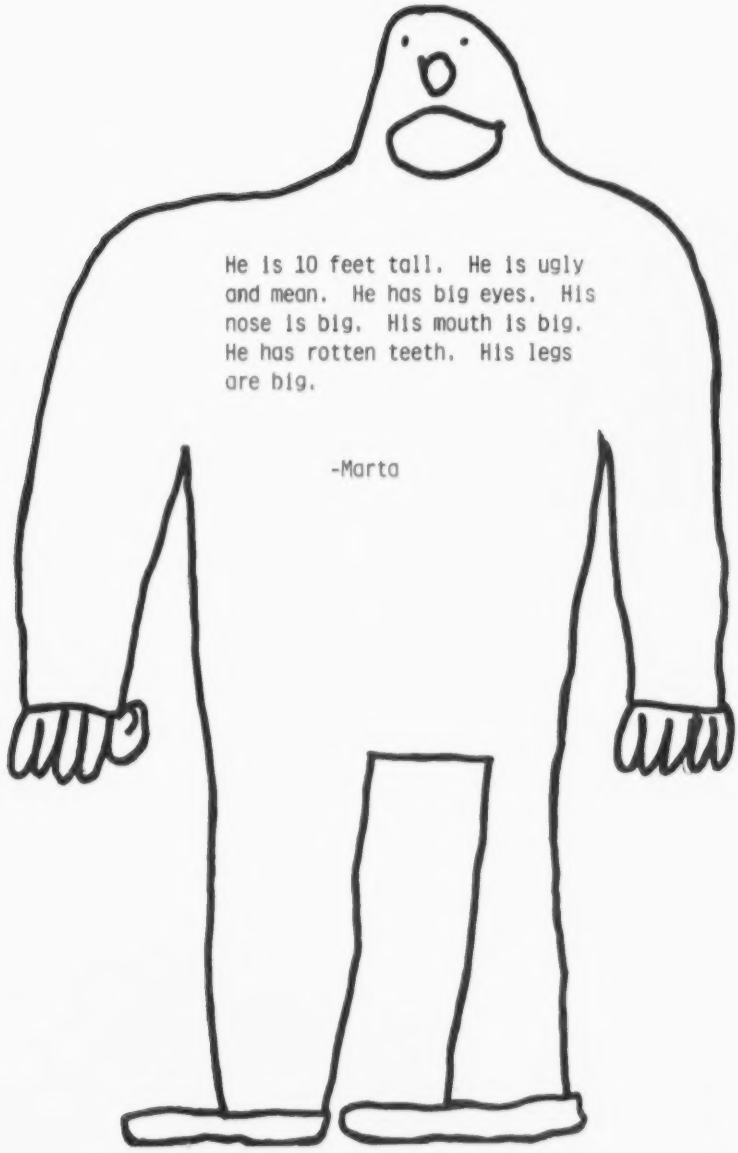
Buster is a bull
Standing behind a fence,
He is lazy and wants
To sit on a bench.

Telly is a teacher
Walking down the hall,
She bumps into a lady
And that is all.

Sammy is a dog
Digging for a bone,
The ground was hard
So Sammy went home.

Writing stories which build the imagination and follow themes of fantasy and magic are techniques which first grade students enjoy. Note the following pieces concerning a leprechaun and Big Foot:

How to catch a Leprechaun.
now I said to My Self if I catch
a Leprechaun. I won't get
lots of gold. maybe I Will get a
net to catch it from his shouse
and He Said "Youll never catch me
now. He is tricKy. Be quiet So I
Will Put Him in the net and then
He Will disappear. Phyllis


He is 10 feet tall. He is ugly and mean. He has big eyes. His nose is big. His mouth is big. He has rotten teeth. His legs are big.
-Marta

Certainly the language experience approach works well with most primary-aged children. However, remember that this tool works best when it follows an actual experience which has excited the senses. The following is an example of what a group of first graders wrote after walking and playing in autumn leaves.

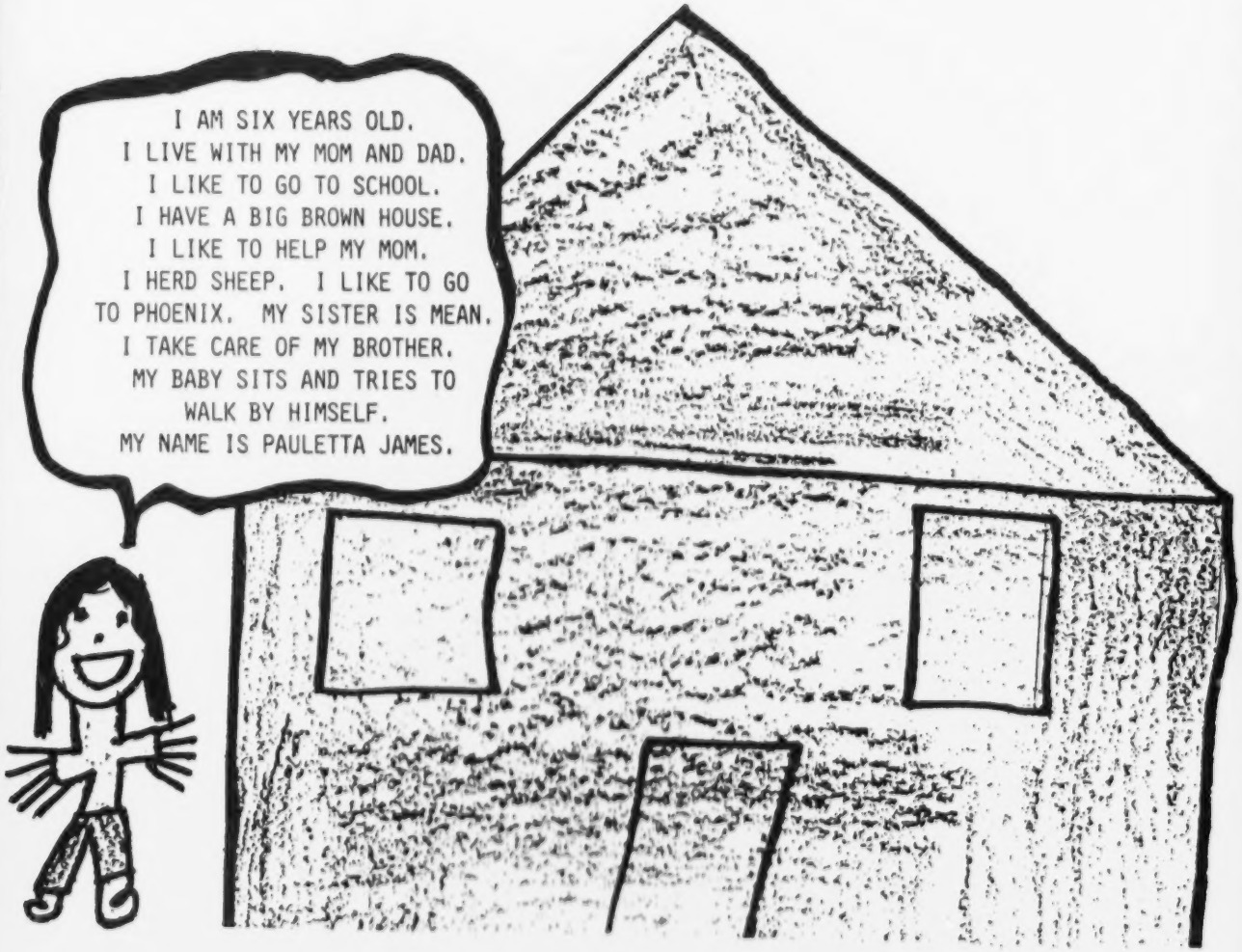
Autumn Leaves

We went outside and picked some leaves. We threw them up in the air and they flew down spinning in circles. When we walked through them, they went "swish," "swish" under our feet. They were soft and wet against our face. They smelled ugly. Their backs had lines on them and they were bumpy.

- by Phil, Rhonda, and Amanda

Autobiographies in which the child adds one sentence each day are also successful. In this technique, the student writes one sentence the first day and shares it with the class. On the second day he adds one more sentence. Now he reads both sentences. During the third day he adds another sentence, and now he reads three. On the tenth day, the child has an autobiography which is 10 sentences long. As he has added to the piece, and as he has practiced reading it to himself and others in the class, he has received quite a bit of meaningful practice.

The following is an example:


I AM SIX YEARS OLD.
I LIVE WITH MY MOM AND DAD.
I LIKE TO GO TO SCHOOL.
I HAVE A BIG BROWN HOUSE.
I LIKE TO HELP MY MOM.
I HERD SHEEP. I LIKE TO GO
TO PHOENIX. MY SISTER IS MEAN.
I TAKE CARE OF MY BROTHER.
MY BABY SITS AND TRIES TO
WALK BY HIMSELF.
MY NAME IS PAULETTA JAMES.

Pattern poetry, such as cinquain, fits easily into any grade and subject. Although there are numerous variations of the five-line sequence, most cinquains begin by asking the student to write on the first line the name of a person, place, or thing. The second line could be two words that describe what the object looks like, and the third line could be three "ing" words associated with the object. On the fourth line, the child could be asked to tell how the object acts. The fifth line of a cinquain is fairly standard. Most types of cinquain ask that the fifth line be one word which is a synonym for the word on line one.

Here is an example by one first grader:

TURKEY
BROWN FAT
RUNNING NAPPING PECKING
LAZY SAD SLEEPY SCARED
BIRD

- by Alex

There are many activities which can be used by the teacher to provide first grade students with opportunities to play with the language. Not all have to be done with paper and pencil, nor do all have to be initiated by one person. First graders are capable of writing the first day, and of reading what they write.

7

## MAKING CONNECTIONS

by Debbie Hickman

Students like to study about football, trains, horses, boats, monkeys, apes, bugs, dolls, bears, space, cartoons, fairy tales, and monsters. The students who attended the LEAP (Language Enrichment Acceleration Program) classes have learned about these things. The LEAP classes, which have replaced traditional remedial reading classes, provide enrichment experiences for approximately 20 percent of the student body. Generally, students who perform higher are served academically, but enough flexibility is built into the program to serve students who are either highly creative or highly motivated about a subject.

The aim of each unit in the LEAP classes is to extract the most interesting possible meaning from the subject, while synthesizing the real world content with the educational needs of the students. The development of "skills" emerges naturally but is subordinate to maintaining the interest in the subject. The connections between school and life merge. Football games become more interesting if you know how to add and keep score. Trains are not just something to wait for at the intersection in Gallup; they have a wild history to tell and read about. Consciousness about the real world is raised. The real world becomes more real. Finding these connections between school and life helps reveal connections in the entire curriculum. Reading, writing, math, science, and the fine arts are linked in their common aim of providing a means of learning more about a subject. The whole becomes greater than the sum of its educational parts.

The creation of the units in LEAP begins with an idea that "grew and grew until the ceiling hung with vines and the walls became the world all around." As a third grader observed at the beginning of a unit, "the room is really empty now, but it will be filled up with neat things after a while." Within each unit, the twists and turns and surprises will emerge to give the unit its unique development.

Finding the Subject. There's no magic formula for finding a suitable subject. Initially, we reject no ideas. One single thought may spark the idea we are looking for. Bookstores are ideal places to get inspired. One children's book can be the stimulus for a whole unit. A beautifully illustrated book about lost carousel horses triggered our horse unit.

Students can be helpful and amusing resources. One first grader thought we should do a unit on God. Another thought eagles were a good topic. We even abandoned our plans for a unit on clocks, because a group of third graders insisted it would just be too boring. Instead a monkeys and apes unit got the students' overwhelming support.

We don't dismiss the packaged materials. The idea for our unit on bears was inspired by a prepared Read-a-Long Series and an activity booklet on a story about a cinnamon bear.

Traditional holidays can also stimulate thinking. The month of March led to talk of possibilities for a unit on elves and leprechauns, to the theme of enchantment, and eventually to our unit on fairy tales.

Narrowing the Subject. Once we've narrowed down the subject, we read, not just children's books, but adult books on the subject as well. Even though we may not be able to use all the information, we can speak on the topic with more authority (especially when another adult walks into the room). The reading may unconsciously trigger some ideas, and even more importantly we get to read and use something that is a real part of this world and not just another "how to teach" book. TV and movies can also be a source of inspiration and information. And when we have invested some time and energy in a subject, our enthusiasm for imparting our knowledge to our students increases immeasurably.

Blending of Fantasy and Reality. As we are developing the possibilities for units, we consider the fantasy and the reality aspects. Every subject has its corresponding fictional component. Horses, rabbits, trains, bears, and space are not complete without considering the Black Stallion, Bugs Bunny, The Little Engine That Could, Winnie the Pooh, and Star Wars respectively. A good example of this kind of blending occurred during our unit on horses. The horses on the Merry-Go-Round were a thoroughbred, a unicorn, Bucephalus, a quarter horse, the Sacred

Dog, a Clydesdale, an Appaloosa, and the Black Stallion. Although mixing the fantasy into the unit may seem superfluous at times, it can be the motivating factor and the stimulus for expanding children's imagination. As Einstein wrote in a letter to a friend, "When I examine myself and my methods of thought, I come to the conclusion that the gift of fantasy has meant more to me than my talent for absorbing knowledge."

Getting Started. With our subject in mind, we leaf through idea books, magazines, journals, or any other material with teaching ideas. Some ideas just leap out as ideal for the subject. For instance, the idea of a wanted poster found in a general writing idea book was perfect for our train unit where we had the students make wanted posters for the infamous train robbers.

We don't make plans and design activities for the whole unit all at once. With our unit on football, we knew we wanted to cover the teams, the positions, basic terminology, referee signals, plays, scorekeeping, and the Superbowl. The idea for the videotaped football trivia bowl did not emerge until after we had started the unit and found the students seriously deficient in some very basic facts. Sometimes we don't know what we need to teach until we've started teaching it!

Language Development. Language development ideas can be adapted from all of the commercial language programs and kits. Yet it is the emerging meaning in each subject which provides the best language development ideas. The following examples from the boat unit are typical of the possibilities for language development activities submerged in every unit:

a) Children shared their homemade boats with the class. They described how they were made, what they were made from, and any other pertinent information and vocabulary.

b) The boat show at the end of the unit provided a natural setting to discuss the seaworthiness of the various homemade boats.

c) The history of boats and ships was ideal for showing sequential development. Were oars invented before sails? Were sails invented before or after the steamship?

d) Genuine questions emerged in context. Can there really be swimming pools on a ship? Why didn't everyone get on the lifeboats when the Titanic sank?

e) Associative thinking exercises developed memory, attentiveness, and extended thinking. We gave a short clue and students guessed the answer. For example: Unsinkable - Titanic, Ping - Wise-eyed boat, Old Ironsides - Constitution, Pearl Harbor - USS Arizona. Once the students have gained some knowledge about the subject, they can be the "teacher" giving the clues.

f) True and false statements reinforced listening comprehension and sentence structure. For example: The Vikings sailed in clipper ships. (True or False). Old Ironsides is another name for the USS Constitution. (True or False). Again students can be the "teachers."

g) Children's literature that features boats was acted out. Sendak's Where the Wild Things Are was appropriate. After all, "an ocean tumbled by with a private boat for Max..."

An important part of all units is to have students ask as many questions as possible about the new topic. We try to encourage "I wonder if..., I wonder how..., and I wonder when..." questions.

There's simply no end to the language development possibilities when the subject matter is worth talking about. During our unit on monkeys and apes, the language of Koko--the gorilla who had learned 500 words in sign language--clearly showed how context and imagination are highly meaningful and motivating factors in language growth. (More examples of language development types of activities are given at the end of this chapter.)

Native Language. Since the majority of our students are Navajo, we try to reinforce the Navajo connection with the unit of study. Some units are better suited for incorporating the Navajo language, while others are best for incorporating the Navajo culture or other Indian cultures. Other units are not at all suited for using the Navajo language or

culture. Our unit on insects worked well for reinforcing the Navajo language. Children involved their parents and grandparents in finding out the equivalent Navajo insect word. We played games using Navajo insect words and labeled the bug collection with the equivalent Navajo word. The space unit was better suited to discussing Navajo and other Indian legends relating to the origin of the universe. For the most part, the monkey and ape unit had few moments for developing interest in the Navajo connection. We did learn that "hash kaan" is the Navajo word for banana.

Use of Literature. Finding appropriate literature on a subject generates a great deal of enthusiasm and stimulates more ideas and activities to enhance a story or unit. A good library is essential. Often the books, fiction or non-fiction, determine the course of events. By letting the librarian and other teachers know ahead of time about our forthcoming units, we usually have more than enough books relating to the subject when we begin a unit. And of course, the students and their parents will bless us with more books and related information as the unit progresses. Also, a few industrious third graders have faithfully checked their basal readers to find relevant stories.

Our favorite reliable resource has been the Cricket magazine for children. Our horse and train unit wouldn't have been the same or as interesting without the magazine. Although the reading level is more suited to intermediate grades, the stories and information can be adapted and shared with the children.

Another reliable favorite has been the Shel Silverstein poems from Where the Sidewalk Ends and A Light in the Attic. The poems can bring a freshness to the subject, and often can be used for pattern writing. Recently, we adapted the poem about the problems of writing on the neck of a running giraffe (p. 107 in Where the Sidewalk Ends) to discuss writing on the tail of a swinging monkey.

Writing. Every writing style or writing idea is a possibility. We try to choose from the multitude of ideas by letting the inherent meaning in the subject matter lead the way. For instance, poetry seemed just right for trains, especially after a student pleasantly surprised us in a poem, saying that "cactus would tickle the train." Discussing the origin of the Casey Jones poem and song was a perfect teaching moment

for showing that someone wrote because he just felt like it. No teacher had to say to that writer, "Today we are going to write a poem about Casey Jones and the big train crash."

A kind of writing pattern emerged within the fairy tale unit. Students tried to parallel the elements in the traditional fairy tale by writing stories where things come in threes, where someone is all good and someone is all bad, where there is a magical agent, and where there is a change in time and setting.

We tend to rely on specific, short writing ideas by letting the meaning and often the humor in the subject determine the activity. (Some of these activities are inserted at the end of the chapter.) We've written a "Union for Bear Rights" sign; compared grasshoppers and humans from the grasshoppers' point of view; conversed between a koala and a polar bear; wrote and responded to letters from the Superheroes; determined the cause of Darth Vader's breathing problem by making and labeling X-rays (black construction paper and chalk); wrote (not rode) on the top of the Merry-go-Round; made tiny elf journals for the "Elves and the Shoemaker" fairy tale; and wrote about brooms, aprons, chains, and other things in the room, and then labeling and explaining which fairy tale character had originally owned them. For instance, "Cinderella used this broom to sweep her mean stepsisters' room."

Journal writing works better for some units than others. For example, journals seemed more appropriate and practical for the unit on the human body than the unit on boats. Since students naturally had many questions and comments about their blood, diseases, accidents, and brothers' and sisters' accidents, the journals provided a needed outlet. With the unit on cartoons, however, the journals would have seemed more forced. Our time is limited, and the need and value for journal writing must be weighed against the time spent on them.

We encourage students to write because they want to write in connection with the topic. By sharing our own story writing, and discussing possible story ideas with the children, we serve as models and motivators for writing. As the children see our involvement in writing, we hope that we can be an inspiration for them to write. Given the limitation of time and the specific focus of study, the LEAP classes

are not the time to teach the writing process. The LEAP classes provide an opportunity to allow students to practice writing in a context.

Science. Within each unit, opportunities emerge for promoting scientific literacy, observing (identifying and noting similarities and differences), classifying (categorizing, grouping, and putting things in order), measuring (counting, weighing, estimating, and quantifying), and predicting (guessing possible outcomes inferred from previous events) which are incorporated whenever it is appropriate and meaningful to the context.

Social Studies. Geography, history, and social concerns emerged whenever practical and appropriate. The football unit provided opportunities to examine the geography of the United States in connection with beloved football teams. Our bear unit started in Australia (koala), moved to China (panda), advanced to the Arctic (polar), went on down to Alaska (kodiak), and found several habitats in the United States (grizzly, brown, and black bears). The boat unit showed the history of invention, and the social history of bears was examined in a discussion of bear-baiting. Animal ecology was naturally integrated into many units.

Contests. It is hard to imagine doing a unit without some kind of contest. Generally some kind of entry fee in the form of writing is expected, but not always. Recently the students have started suggesting contest ideas. They were quite pleased with their idea for the "Going Bananas" contest for the monkey and ape unit, where the object was to transform a paper cut-out of a banana into something interesting. For the most part, the teachers have designed the contests, but we have been pleased with the growing initiative the students are taking in the units. Here are a few examples of our contests:

> The Great Grasshopper Race was held as a culmination to a unit on insects. Students could enter their live grasshoppers in the race only if they paid an entry fee which involved writing about their grasshoppers. They could write about where their grasshoppers came from, how long they had been in training, what their fastest time was, and what kind of tennis shoes they wore. Students were expected to give their grasshoppers a name and a number before entering the race.

In connection with the fairy tale unit, specifically "Rumpelstiltskin," we gave the students three chances to guess the name of the fairy tale character we had secretly selected for that week's contest. Of course, we held this contest three times with three different characters.

The Mystery Sports Person contest was an on-going part of the sports unit. A photograph of a famous sports figure was covered with construction paper. One small section of the paper was removed from the photograph each day. Students were allowed to ask a limited number of questions about the famous person each day. Many students went home each day and asked parents or older brothers and sisters for advice and possible questions. At the end of the week, students would be given a chance to secretly vote on their choice.

During our bear unit, the children could get a chance to guess the number of Gummi cinnamon bears in a jar after they had completed an assignment or activity. The winner got to take home the whole jar of yummy candy bears.

Evaluation or Celebration. Evaluating the children's performance can vary from unit to unit. We generally try to look at both their written and oral participation. For some units we ask them to write what they have learned about the subject. We evaluate their writing on the degree of interest they showed, the knowledge they gained, and their degree of ownership of or personal interpretation of what we have studied. We're looking for statements like, "When we learned about the Titanic I thought is was really scary, and it was really dumb not to have enough lifeboats for everybody"; or "I wonder if the engineer gets greasy or not, and I don't see how a train can get to the Rock Island"; or "I know all the referee signals like an incomplete pass, touchdown, time out, holding...and I hope I can be a football player for the Dolphins. I want to be the quarterback like Joe Montana."

We've also used tests--matching, multiple choice, true and false, and fill in the blank.

In addition to evaluating the units, we also like to celebrate the ending of the units. We've had a boat show, a train station visit, a videotaped football trivia bowl, a horseshoe throwing contest, movies, a grasshopper race, and a "chocolate covered banana eating day" to name a few.

Home Links. We want parents to share in their child's development and not just in their schooling. We would like to help parents recognize that education is more than knowing that their child is reading at grade level, minding the teacher, getting good grades or scoring well on tests. Although we encourage children to discuss subjects at home, and often direct them to ask specific questions (e.g., How many bones in the body? How many stars are there? Who will win the Superbowl?), the ultimate aim is to motivate the children to want to share knowledge and curiosity about a subject at home because of the interest generated in school.

From each subject area emerges a particular kind of parent involvement. We try to minimize possible patronizing by parents through having a specific reason for their participation. During our horse unit some parents contributed original drawings of horses. The fairy tale unit brought in several parent readers. We even heard "The Three Little Pigs" in Navajo! Our train unit took on new dimensions because four or five parents were involved in sharing ideas for the unit before it began. The monkey and ape unit was an appropriate opportunity for a mother to show animal slides from her recent trip to Africa.

**General Implications**

As teachers take charge of creatively shaping the direction or their curriculum through meaning-based units, their teaching becomes more like the composing process in writing. Just as the emerging meaning in the writing leads the way for the writer, the emerging meaning in the subject matter leads the way for the teacher. Teaching, like writing, is discovering. And like the writer who knows that surprises will emerge, teachers can come to school looking for surprises as well.

Finding your own voice in teaching or writing requires a supportive environment to explore ideas. A supportive environment for teachers leads to a supportive environment for learning. In the ending to Where

<u>the Wild Things Are</u>, Maurice Sendak understands the need for a safe environment in which thought and imagination may flourish:

> ...but Max stepped into his private boat and waved good-bye and sailed back over a year and in and out of weeks and through a day and into the night of his very own room where he found his supper waiting for him and it was still hot.

The following are samples of pages from the bear, bug, and horse unit books. They are not sequenced in any order except that a variety of ideas was selected.

BRANDS CAN BE USED IN A VARIETY OF WAYS.

THE CHILDREN CAN USE STANDARD BRANDS OR MAKE UP THEIR OWN AND ADD THEM TO A HORSE PICTURE.

STUDENTS CAN ORALLY GIVE DIRECTIONS FOR MAKING A BRAND WHILE OTHERS TRY TO MAKE IT WHILE FOLLOWING THE ORAL DIRECTIONS ONLY.

STUDENTS CAN DISCUSS THE USE AND IMPORTANCE OF BRANDS.

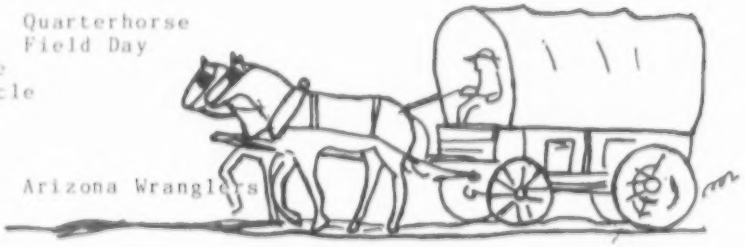
Tongue Twisters (Students can try to say these, make up some of their own or illustrate them.)

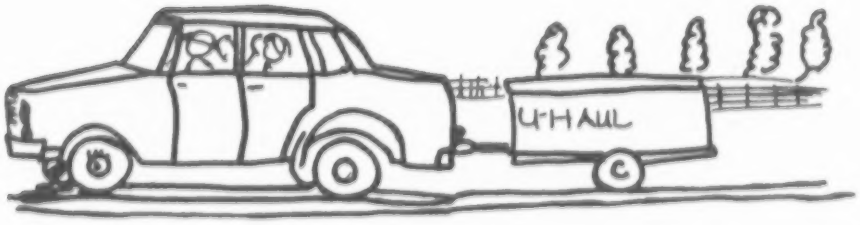
Black Beauty bit a butterfly.
The heavy huge horse hauled hay.
A Stallion stood still in the sinking sand.
A Shetland shot the sheriff in a showdown.
How many Shetlands can you shear if you can shear a Shetland?
A mare married a mean mule.

A Pinto was painted with a pint of paint.
The Bronco broke the barn gate.
The cold colt caught a coca-cola.
The golden gelding galloped to Gallup.
The thoroughbred trotted to the track.
The spotted stud stole the show in South Saginaw.

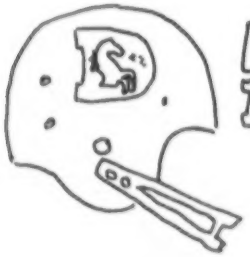
Similarities and Differences (Students can determine how the following pairs are alike and different)

bicycle - horse
mule - horse
mouse - horse
jockey - pilot
saddle - chair
trading post - supermarket
horse - car
colt - puppy
thoroughbred - Quarterhorse
Kentucky Derby - Field Day
elephant - horse
unicorn - unicycle
train - horse
human - horse
dog - horse
Denver Broncos - Arizona Wranglers



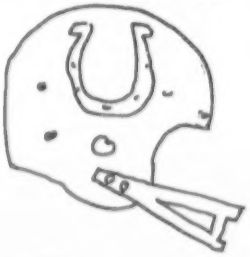


# Do Horse's Make Good Mascots?



DENVER BRONCOS

BALTIMORE COLTS



BIRMINGHAM STALLION

USFL

Which Horse would you want for a Mascot?

# YOU DON'T SAY

THE FOLLOWING IDIOMS AND PHRASES CAN BE DISCUSSED, INTERPRETED, OR ILLUSTRATED. IT CAN BE AMUSING TO COMPARE THE INTENDED MEANING TO THE LITERAL MEANING.

---

YOU CAN TAKE A HORSE TO THE WATER, BUT YOU CANNOT MAKE HIM DRINK.

A HORSE OF ANOTHER COLOR.

AS STRONG AS A HORSE.

DON'T LOOK A GIFT HORSE IN THE MOUTH.

HOLD YOUR HORSES.

STRAIGHT FROM THE HORSE'S MOUTH.

TO BE ON ONE'S HIGH HORSE.

TO PUT THE CART BEFORE THE HORSE.

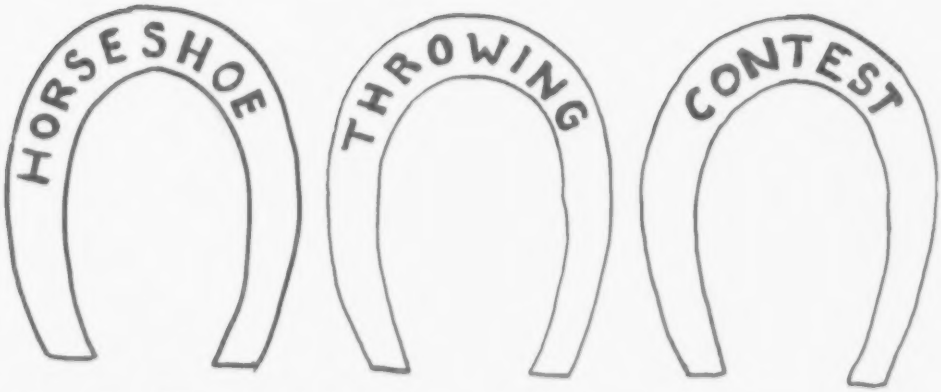
HORSE POWER.

DARK HORSE.

IRON HORSE.

---

(YOU MIGHT WANT TO CONSULT BREWER'S DICTIONARY OF PHRASE AND FABLE)

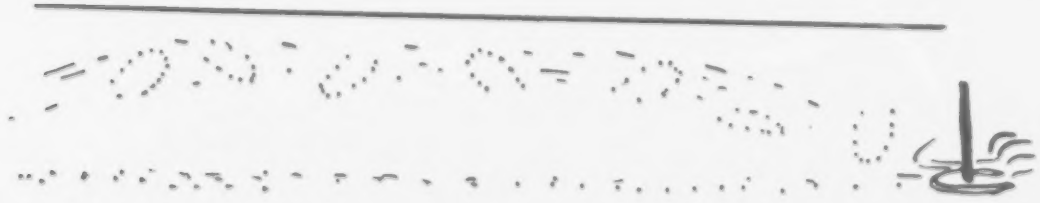


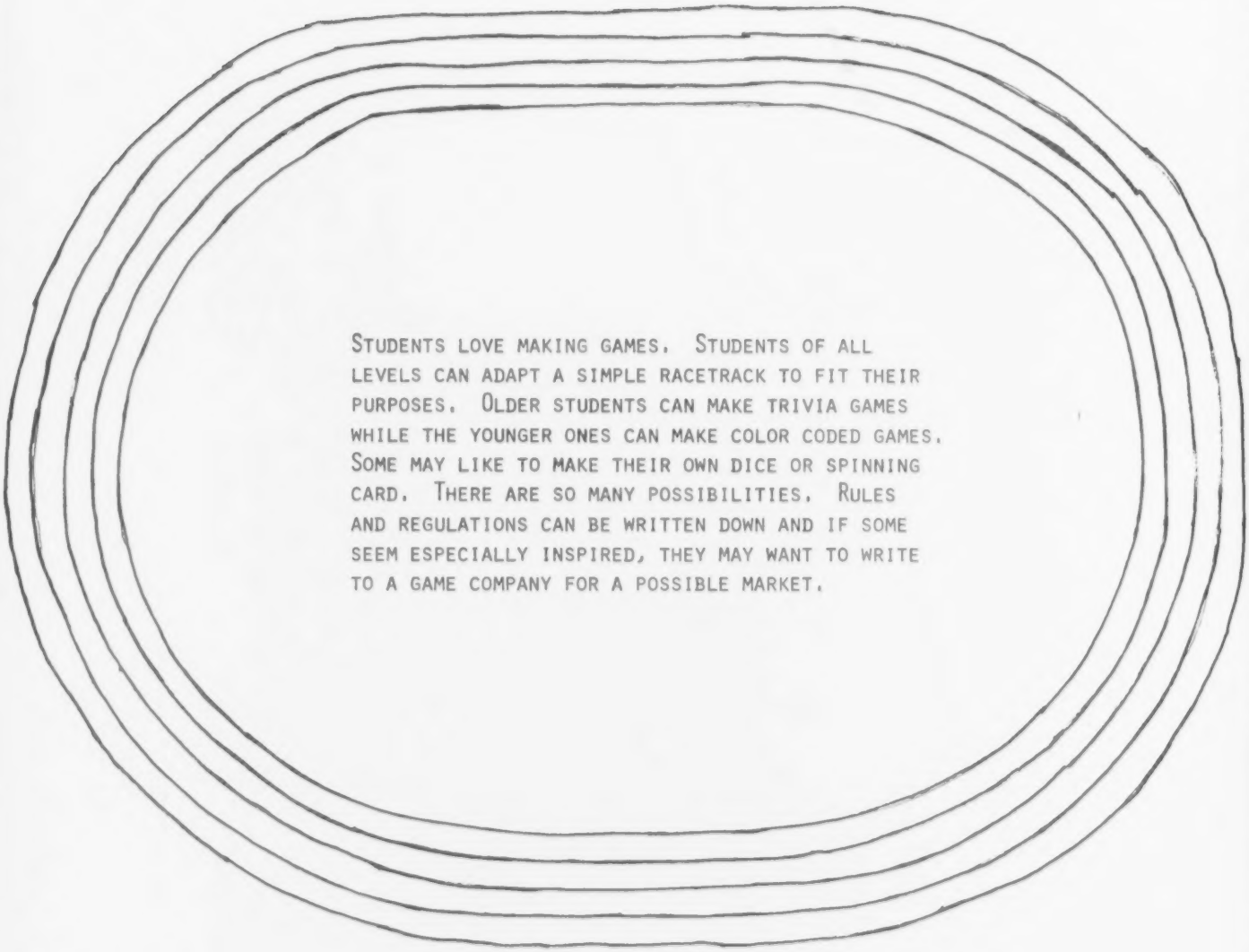

ENTRY FEE Write about your horseshoe. Where did it come from? Was it from a famous horse? Was it a race horse? Did it lose a shoe in the race? Was it from a Rodeo? Was it an imaginary horse?

Before students can enter the horseshoe throwing contest they must "pay" the Entry Fee of the writing assignment described above.

Prizes for our contest varied from a piece of gum to art work donated by the high school students.

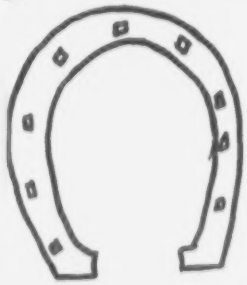
We found that old magic markers attached to cardboard worked well for the horseshoe stakes. We tried to follow the rules of the real horseshoe game as much as we could remember. Perhaps a student could have done some research on the game for us.





STUDENTS LOVE MAKING GAMES. STUDENTS OF ALL LEVELS CAN ADAPT A SIMPLE RACETRACK TO FIT THEIR PURPOSES. OLDER STUDENTS CAN MAKE TRIVIA GAMES WHILE THE YOUNGER ONES CAN MAKE COLOR CODED GAMES. SOME MAY LIKE TO MAKE THEIR OWN DICE OR SPINNING CARD. THERE ARE SO MANY POSSIBILITIES. RULES AND REGULATIONS CAN BE WRITTEN DOWN AND IF SOME SEEM ESPECIALLY INSPIRED, THEY MAY WANT TO WRITE TO A GAME COMPANY FOR A POSSIBLE MARKET.

# Once I was a horseshoe



## But now I'm a . . . . .

Give students a page with only a horseshoe on it. Ask students to use their imagination and change the horseshoe into something else. Accept all responses and delight in the original. Students can write about the transformation beginning with "Once I was a horseshoe but now I'm a _____." They may want to explain why being a horseshoe was no fun and how things were better or worse as the transformed horseshoe.

Samples

Once I was a horseshoe but now I'm a covered wagon

Once I was a horseshoe but now I'm part of Utah

Imagination exercises (Students think of appropiate horses to complete the following)

wild as a _____

strong as a _____

fast as a _____

gentle as a _____

hungry as a _____

old as a _____

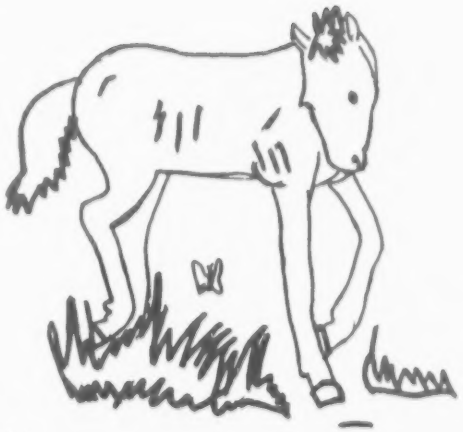
famous as a _____

mean as a _____

faithful as _____

spooky as a _____

frisky as a _____



(or try this the other way around)

_____ as a Thoroughbred

_____ as a Quarterhorse

_____ as a Mustang

_____ as a carousel horse

_____ as a Morgan horse

_____ as a Palomino

_____ as a Clydesdale

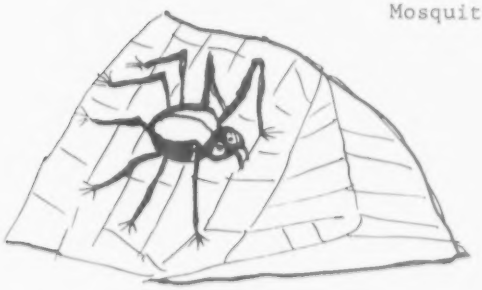
_____ as a colt

_____ as the Black Stallion

# BUGS HAVE FEELINGS TOO

I am a mosquito. I have two wings to fly with. I have a little skinny body. I will fly under the tree if you try to catch me and put me in a jar.

Your friend,
Mosquito



I am a black widow spider. Please don't pick me up or I'll poison you. I wish I were a lady-bug with red, white, and blue spots. I hope you don't kill me.

Your friend,
Spider

I am a butterfly. I have beautiful yellow and black wings. I don't want to play with you. Don't bother me.

Your friend,
Butterfly

I am a tiny ladybug. I am so poor. Please buy me a tiny dress. I like to wear red clothes.

Your friend,
Ladybug

Sentence combining (Students try to combine the two sentences into one more complex sentence. For very young students it may work best to do it visually, then orally and eventually in writing)

1. The bug is fat.

2. The bug is spotted.

(possible answers)
The fat bug is spotted.
The spotted bug is fat.

1. The grasshopper sat on my arm.
2. The grasshopper is green.

1. The ladybug is tiny.
2. The ladybug can fly.

1. The butterfly is pretty.
2. The butterfly is yellow and black.

1. The tarantula is hairy.
2. The tarantula can bite.

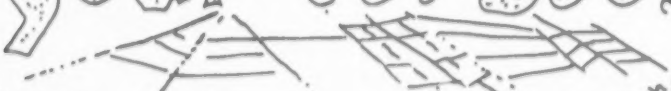
1. The cricket can make noise.
2. The cricket is black.
3. The cricket is little.

1. The ant is red.
2. The ant can bite.
3. The ant lives in the ground.

1. The fly carries germs.
2. The fly is black.
3. The germs are dangerous.

1. The spider can bite.
2. The spider is a black widow.
3. The bite is poisonous.

# Make up a HOLIDAY for your pet BUG.



Show that you really care.

Sample IDEA

## Be Kind to FLY DAY

What to do: Wear Black in honor of your fly

Leave the doors and windows open so the flies can come in when they want to.

Let a fly sit on your nose as long as it wants to.

Leave fly food out. (What ever that is...)

What not to do: Don't read I Know an old Lady who swallowed a fly

I FUB A CRANE
FLY, A BACK ANT,
A GRB, A CREKIT,
A STENC BUG,
A PILL BUG and A

LITTLE BROWN ANT.

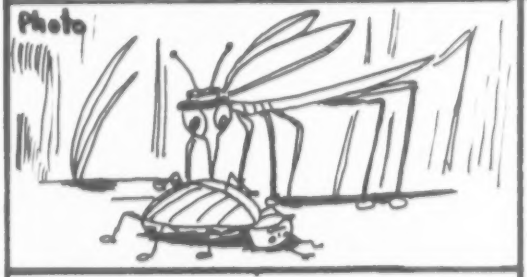
1st grade Angie

# BUGGY NEWS

Hornet STING

MOSQUITO BITES 33rd VICTIM

Photo



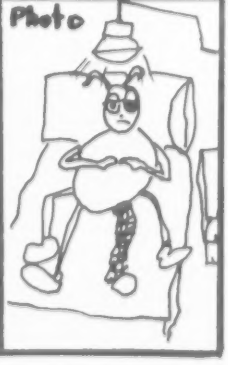
GRASSHOPPER accused of using STEROIDS

Photo

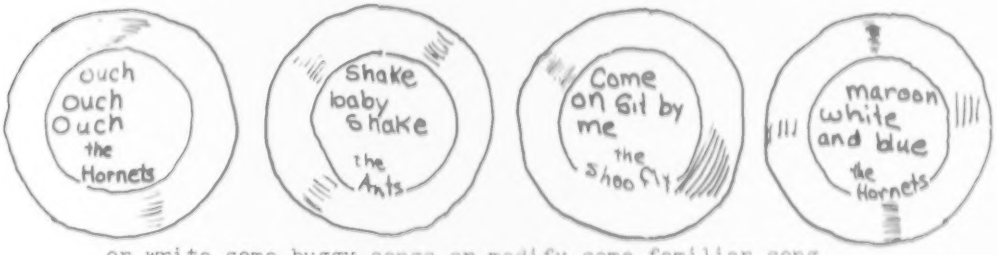
Army Ants SHOOT Moth

1ST LADYBUG Leg Transplant

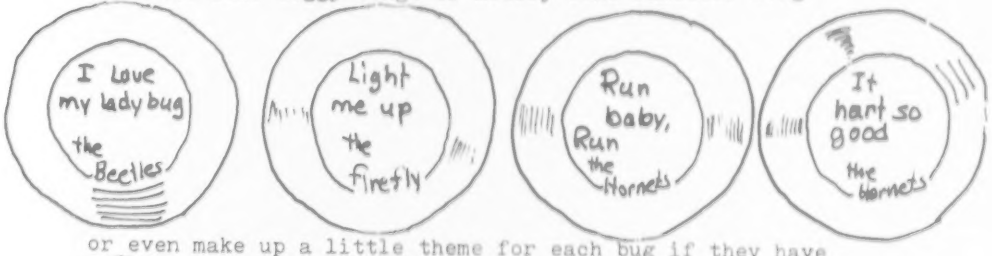
Photo



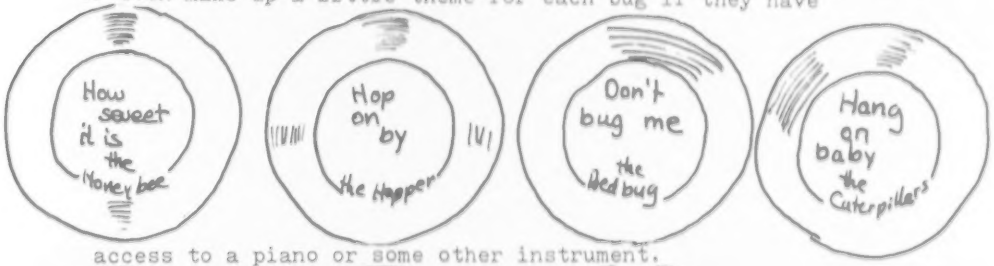
Students may like making up song titles by various bugs



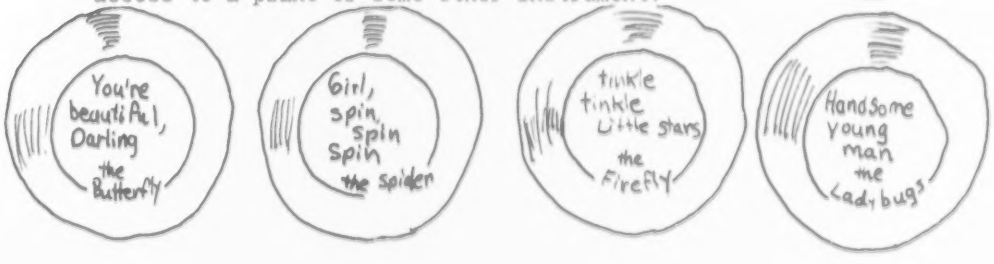

or write some buggy songs or modify some familiar song




or even make up a little theme for each bug if they have




access to a piano or some other instrument.


You're beautiful, Darling the Butterfly
Girl, spin, spin spin the Spider
tinkle tinkle little stars the Firefly
Handsome young man the Ladybugs

Ants lose home in flood
Mosquito Bites 33rd Victim
Old Lady Goes On Trial for Swallowing a Fly
Mt. Ant Hill erupts after 2 days rumbling
Raid causes 'CANCER'
Firefly mistaken to be UFO
boycott Rock Band the Crickets on stage tonight
TICK season starts today
Caterpillars 1981 Olympic
1st Ant becomes ANT-mologist
Dare Devil EVIL BULL WEEVIL breaks WORLD RECORD
Grasshopper WINS marathon
NEW! Technique Of Trapping USED by Spiders
WILD CATS allergic to Hornet sting
HONEY bee On strike!!

(Students can use these headlines or make up some of their own. They could try to write an article for a newspaper, draw a "photo" to go with the headline, insert a headline on a buggy news page, or have children, especially reluctant or early writers simply fill in the headline section and pretend to write something about the headline. Students could also have fun determining which headline is the most important giving it the banner headline. Students may also like making up a headline for an already written article.

The following page illustrates examples of headlines on a Buggy News Page. I see no end to the possibilities here. Some students may actually want to "publish" and sell their buggy newspaper.)

by Sigmund Boloz and Debbie Hickman

The Computer

I like being a computer because people like asking me questions. I answer the questions that they ask. I like answering the questions, all kinds of questions. I like writing stories too, even animal stories. I like people to write stories on me. Also, I like rhymes and riddles.

But one day something happened to me. One of the children in Mrs. Stando's class pressed the on and off button in the disc drive. Miss VanGundy had to send me to Phoenix to be fixed. It was a long ride.

I am happy to be back in the library now, children love to play on me. They like to play games on me. When Miss VanGundy has to send the children back to their classrooms, I feel sorry for them. They feel sorry for me too, because I feel alone when they go.

by Rayola, Second Grade

Integration is as important a word in second and third grade as it is in kindergarten and first grade. In fact, many of the comments made in the previous chapters apply to the upper primary-aged students as well.

As children move up the ladder of education, content teaching encompasses more of the educator's instruction. Instead of looking for what to add to the curriculum or for what to throw out, we should delight in the fact that we have such a rich curriculum with which to work. However, because of fragmentation, the delight of many has

turned to anguish. This chapter focuses on using writing to integrate content and on establishing a writing environment in the classroom. Examples of second and third grade work will be given.

There are some vital elements which must be present in a classroom writing project. First, the teacher must establish an environment where the students feel secure. Activities which build a student's confidence and self-esteem must be planned.

This can be achieved through making no demands that students construct absolutely correct pieces each time they write. Instead, the teacher needs to be flexible and accepting of each student's efforts, since these efforts are clues about or reflections of the student's developmental stage.

If there is an atmosphere of distrust, criticism, or fear of failure within the classroom, the children will not express themselves freely, nor will they write anything that may bring negative attention to them. The teacher's formal message to the students may be, "I wish you would use your imagination and be creative." However, the informal message to the student may be "Keep it neat, clean, correct, and finish it." These two worlds can seldom coexist and, in fact, often collide.

If children are insecure, begin with large group-teacher participant activities. Share the responsibility for the writing process with the child. This type of collective writing effort develops into a personal one as students' control over language increases, and as they experience growth in security and self-confidence.

It is important that children have a great number of writing experiences during the school year. Frank (1979) recommends a minimum of 30 different writing activities. Learning to express oneself is more than merely writing a story. It is also making lists, filling out applications, writing letters, writing notes, copying riddles or jokes, making poems, etc. It is anything that involves writing words to express thought patterns.

A teacher of writing need not enjoy writing, although this is the ideal. However, the teacher must have had experience with the frustrations and power of writing. The more skillful the teacher, the

better he or she can guide the student to and through satisfying writing experiences.

Some basic advice in starting and maintaining a writing program follows:

1. Write every day. Teachers and children should write daily for a number of audiences and for a number of purposes. Students should see teachers write.

2. Devote attention to helping students gain fluency and not to their errors and problems. Reinforce quality one step at a time, by working on a few errors at a time.

3. Allow students to develop control over the selection of their own writing topics as often as possible.

4. Nurture success. Create writing assignments which are attainable and allow for a wide variety of success for each child.

5. Encourage peer editing. Don't get lost in trying to read everything the students write. Instead, teach students to act as resources for one another.

6. Build a classroom environment rich in literature and poetry and in the performing and visual arts .

7. Help students see that revision is not a sign of failure but of respect for and appreciation of their language.

8. Spend time on developing word-power and encourage sharing.

9. Allow students to experiment with many writing tools: colored pencils, chalk, pens, crayons, magic markers, etc., and make these available to the students.

10. Remember that writing is more than handing out the paper. Make sure that assignments are interesting and worthwhile. As the teacher, try your own assignments along with the students.

Children need opportunities to express themselves, to be heard, and to share their feelings with others. They will find that their writing is meaningful and important if it pertains to something they are interested in or to something that they see value in doing.

As Ms. Lochansky, a Transitional 3 teacher, stated:

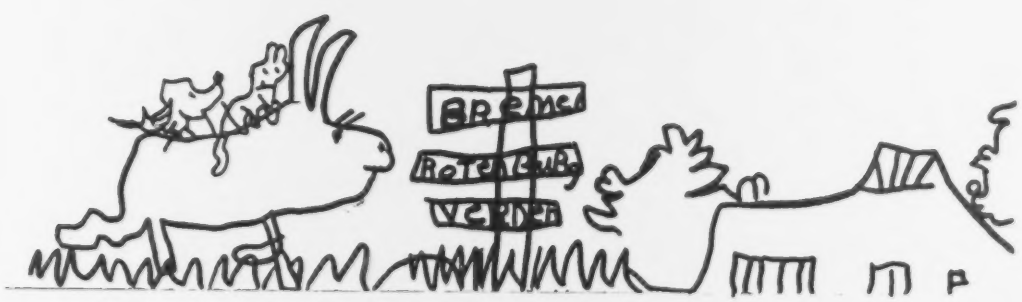
> Various forms of writing have become a very large part of our language arts program in recent years. We have tried to teach our students that there are many forms of writing, and many different reasons for learning to write effectively.
>
> Many teachers often lose track of the fact that much reading is done for sheer enjoyment. One of our goals this year was to get kids interested and motivated enough to want to read on their own. By writing a review of a book he has read, one student encourages others to read.

The following is an example:

The Bremen-Town Musicians
by Ruth Below

Once upon a time there was a donkey who was getting old and his master didn't want him any more. On his way to Bremen-town he met a dog, a cat, and a rooster. When they were going to sleep the rooster looked around and saw a bright sight so they went to the house. The donkey looked in the window. The donkey scared the robbers away and they stayed forever.

--by Francine



Ms. Lochansky found ways to publicize her second and third graders' book reviews. Using the morning announcements as a format, several of her students made oral presentations of the reviews. Many did not use scripts. The class also videotaped book talks for the library. These were saved and shown to others as an introduction to a new library lesson.

Her class also closely aligned itself with students in the lower primary grades. Her students were regularly scheduled to work as peer tutors within the kindergarten and first grade classrooms and to read to the younger students. At the same time, adults and older students came to read to her class.

Trying to make the link between real experiences and literacy, Ms. Lochansky's class adopted a local picnic area called Cottonwood Park. She explains:

> After we cleaned it (the park) up each time, we engaged in various activities that had something to do with nature. The kids thoroughly enjoyed the activities we did. It provided the motivation by stimulating our writing assignments. Describing what you have done or explaining something in writing is very important.

The following are examples of some of the class projects as explained in the students' writings.

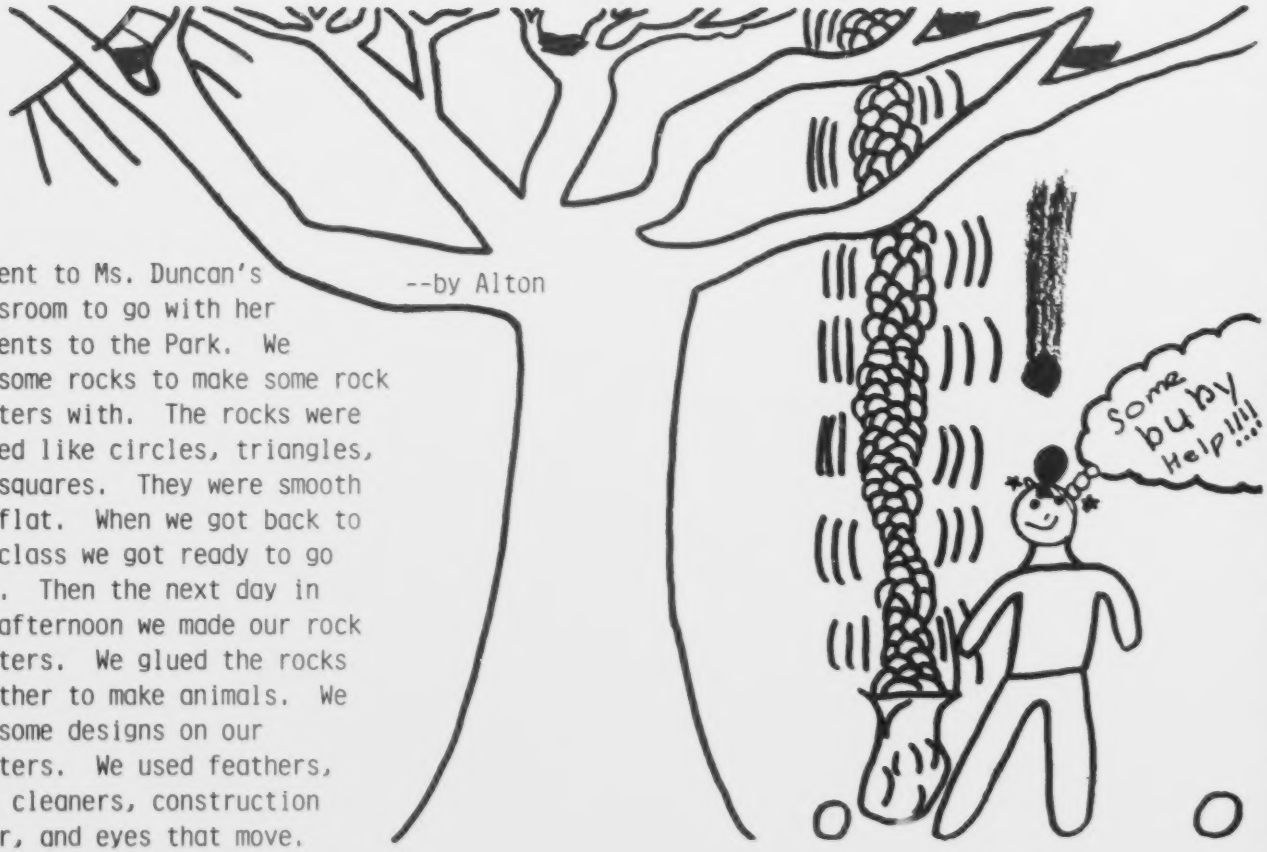
## BEAUTIFICATION

Sometimes when we go to the park we pick up all kinds of trash. We pick it up with the sixth graders. We take bags with us so we can put our trash in it. We pick it up because we want it to be beautiful. I sure do like it there and it is fun to keep the park clean. We usually fill at least 10 bags. I think drunks and stupid people throw it there. We pick up cans, paper, diapers, clothes, kleenex, and scraps. It never stays clean.

--by Neda

--by Tracy

ROCK CRITTERS




We went to Ms. Duncan's classroom to go with her students to the Park. We got some rocks to make some rock critters with. The rocks were shaped like circles, triangles, and squares. They were smooth and flat. When we got back to the class we got ready to go home. Then the next day in the afternoon we made our rock critters. We glued the rocks together to make animals. We put some designs on our critters. We used feathers, pipe cleaners, construction paper, and eyes that move. They looked great. We put some of them in the board room for everyone to see. --by Francine

--by Alton

MEASURE RAINFALL

We put jars in Cottonwood Park to see how much it rained. Then we went to Cottonwood Park to get the jars back. We only found one jar by the trees on high ground. We put the other jar by the wash on low ground. We couldn't find the one by the wash. We went back to Ms. Duncan's class to give her the jar we found. The jar was on its side so there wasn't much water in it. We had left the lids open so the rain could go in the jar.

--by Melody

--by Sheila

BLINDFOLD

We went to Ms. Duncan's class and they decided to blindfold everyone in our class. They let us around at the Park. We had fun and took turns. Even Ms. Duncan and Ms. Lochansky had turns. They had us feel the ground and the trees and the leaves. It was dark and scary with the blindfold on. We had to listen to the air and feel the things around us. It was a lesson in trusting and sensitivity of the things around us.

--by Aurelia

TREE COOKIES

We went to Cottonwood Park. We took some saws to Cottonwood Park. We made some tree cookies. This is how we made it.
We sawed the end of the tree off. But not the whole thing. Just the part that looks like a cookie. It was fun. Then it was bus time. Then we hurried to our classroom. Our teacher gave us homework. We went to our bus, then went home.

--by Cassandra

We each picked our own tree. One day we took paper and pencil to the park. We sat down on the ground by our tree and drew it on paper. We colored the bark by rubbing dirt on the paper. We colored the top of the tree by rubbing grass on it. We made it bumpy by rubbing the paper against the bark of the tree.

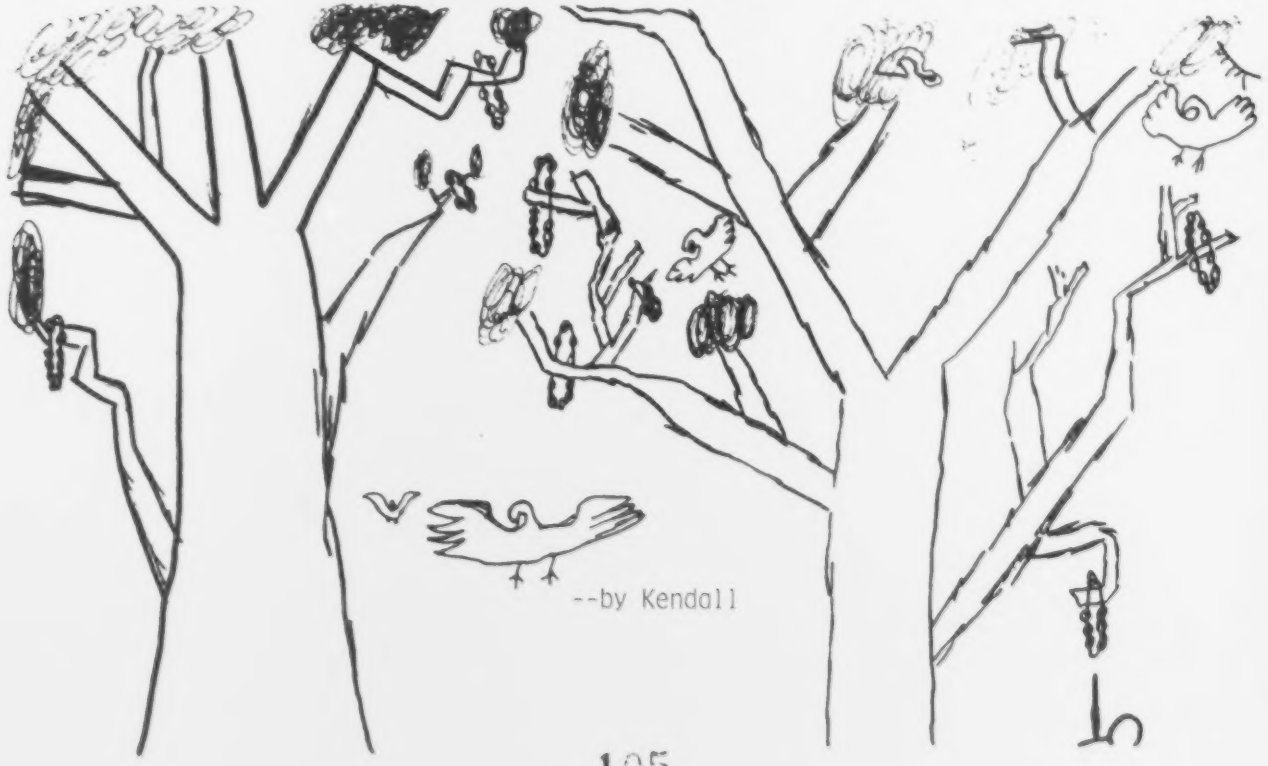
--by William

DRAW OUR TREE

## FEED THE BIRDS

One time we gave some food to the birds. It was Cherio rings. All we did was put Cherios on some yarn. We made them in the winter because they have nothing to eat. Then we went back to the park and hung them up on the tree branches. The next time we went they were gone. I bet the birds really liked them. That is maybe why whenever we go they sing to us.

--by Neda



--by Kendall

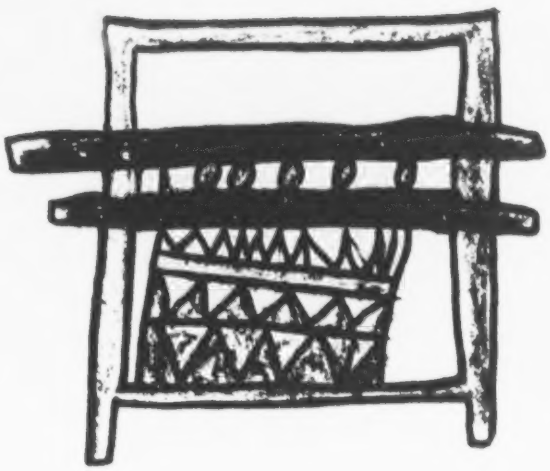
When beginning to write, some students may take several weeks to show any type of improvement. Don't panic. Writing is hard work and, therefore, beginning activities that will help motivate expression should be "low risk." However, make sure that children become active participants in their own education. They need to practice new skills in meaningful situations.

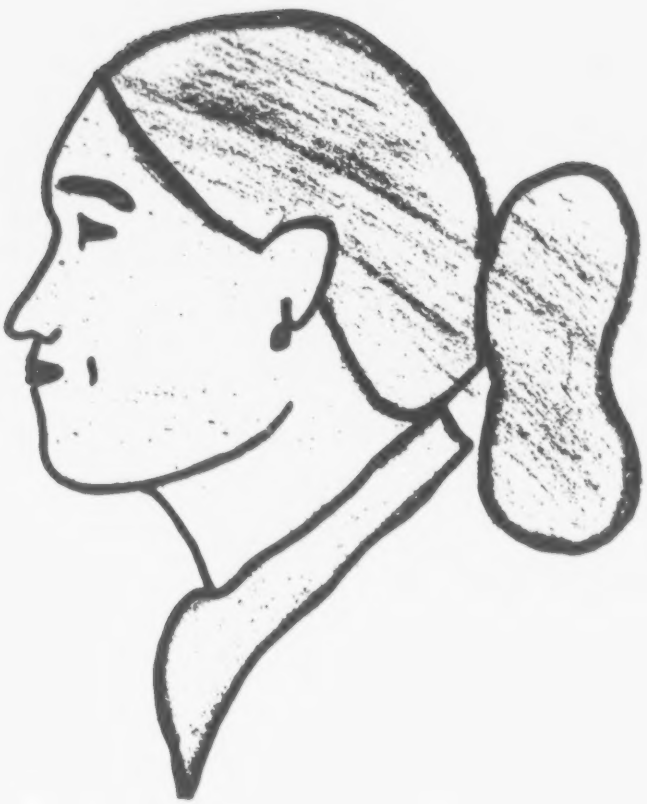
Since students are experts on the subject of themselves, let children write about what's important to them. Young children have great imaginations, and letting children write will unlock their minds.

Mrs. Quahi's and Mrs. Stando's classes completed a book about Navajos and their heritage. After visiting local landmarks and hearing community speakers, the class completed a volume of information which the school published. The following are examples.

My mom makes rugs and rings. My mom also fixes the house at home. She knows how to do alot of things. My mother makes lot of pretty rugs to sell at the store.

-Lolita





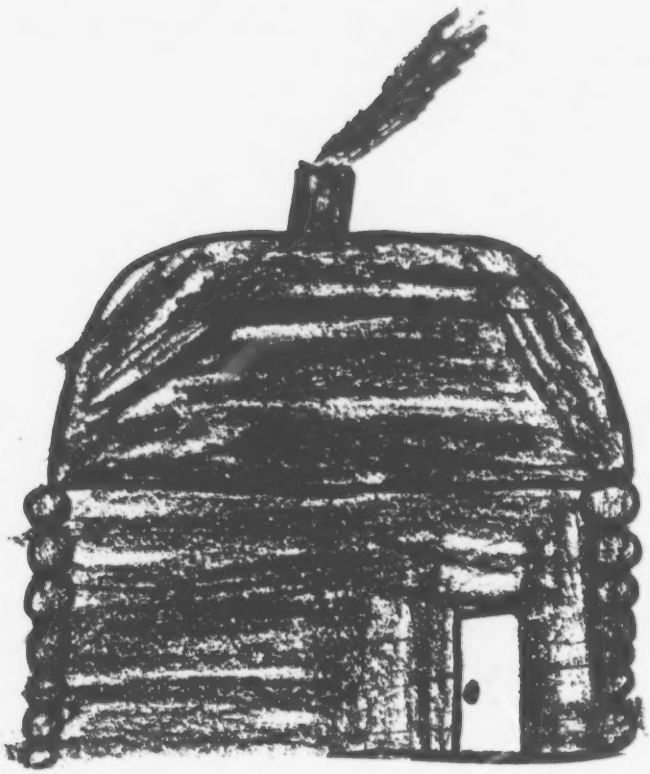
Navajo Woman's Hair Knot

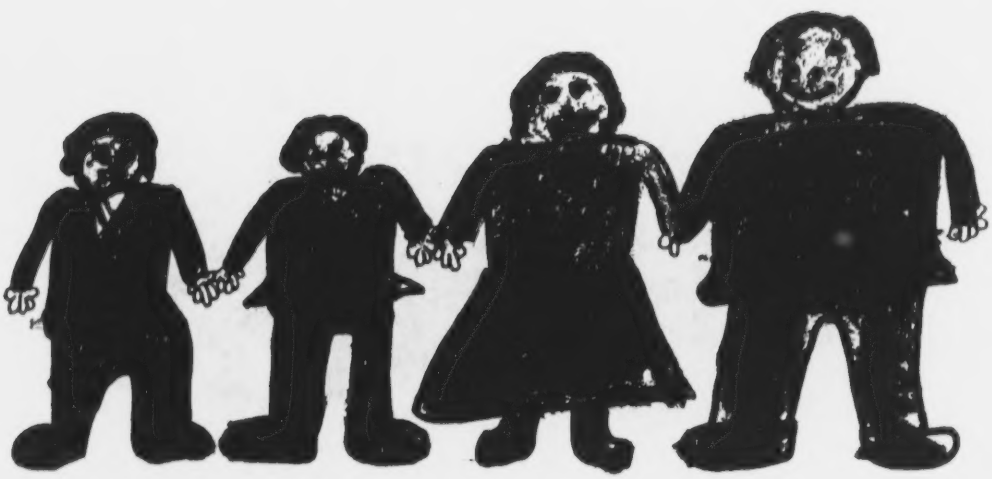
Some of the Navajo women wear their hair in a knot. It is good for woman to wear their hair in a knot so you don't go crazy.

-Velma

The Navajo people live in hogans. The Navajos build their hogans from long pine logs. The hogan has a dirt roof. The smoke comes out of the roof. The door opens to the east, so the first sun light can shine in.

-Wendall





I danced the Round Dance. It was fun and felt really good.
I like being a Navajo.

-Veronica

There are many other techniques which can be used quickly and effectively in the primary grades to encourage reluctant students to start writing. These are safe in that they require little risk of failure. For example, a diamante is a poem that is shaped as a diamond. This seven-line poem works well with pairs of words that are opposites or with words that appear to be very different.

Ask the student to choose a pair of words that are opposites. Have the student write one of the words on line 1 and the other word on line 7. On line 2, have the child write two words that describe the word on line 1. At the same time, have the child write two words on line 6 that describe the word on line 7.

On line 3, the student should enter three participles ("ing" words) that tell about line 1, and he should do the same on line 5 as it tells about line 7. The last line is a transitional phrase which will link the two opposites. So on line 4, have the student write a phrase that makes a general statement about the opposites. Here are two that were done for science units:

WINTER
COLD WET
SNOWING SLEETING SHIVERING
THE SEASONS CHANGE
BLOWING STEAMING SWEATING
HOT DRY
SUMMER

- by Mark

SNAKE
SKINNY LONG
EATING KILLING ATTACKING
MAMMALS AND REPTILES LOOK DIFFERENT
RUNNING WALKING TROTTING
WARM-BLOODED BIG
HORSE

- by Stacey

Acrostics also offer many writing opportunities in the content areas. While studying reptiles in science class, students were asked to select a word from the unit. One student selected the word "lizard."

The teacher instructed the student to write the word "lizard" vertically down the page. She then instructed the student to write words which were related to the unit, next to each letter. The only constraint was that each line was to begin with the appropriate letter:

**L**iving
**I**cky
**Z**ooms
**A**nimal
**R**apid
**D**arts

Instead of using the first letter of each word, the teacher could have had the student use the word lizard as the last letter or the middle letter of the structure:

sma**L**l
l**I**zard
si**Z**es
anim**A**ls
d**R**y
col**D**-blooded

Another variation would be to have the students write short phrases beginning with the appropriate letter:

Lizards are cold-blooded animals.
Indians do not kill lizards.
Zoos have a special place for them.
African chameleons change color.
Red lizards can be found in Arizona.
Dragons called Komodo are huge lizards.

Although these structures may seem simple, they force the child to inventory what he knows about the subject. They also provide an informal evaluation for the teacher.

Another technique which works well with second and third graders is writing riddles. The student writes sentences that describe a subject. The sentences contain many details about what the subject does and eats, and where the subject lives, etc. The reader must then decide from the clues what the subject is.

> I am keen and green. I live on a lilypad and jump from lilypad to lilypad. When I was born my mom and dad left me. Oh, oh! Here comes a snake. Bye, bye. What am I?
>
> - by Raymond

Imaginary poetry is an excellent 4-line structure for making comparisons. For instance, the child cuts a picture of an object out of a magazine, or he selects an object that he likes from his environment. On line 1 he writes the name of the object, on line 2 he writes two words that the object is made of, on line 3 he writes two words which describe the way the object feels to the touch, and on line 4 he writes a statement concerning what the object is always doing. A third grader completed this format as follows:

> A WATCH
> MADE OF TURQUOISE AND SILVER
> FEELS HARD AND STRONG
> IS ALWAYS ON TIME

When this phase is completed, the student places his name or an appropriate pronoun in front of each line. The result is often humorous and it also serves as an introduction to a student since we tend to select objects which we value. Note the following:

Lorenzo is A WATCH.
He is MADE OF TURQUOISE AND SILVER.
He FEELS HARD AND STRONG.
He is ALWAYS ON TIME.

The possibilities and techniques are endless. Children can write tongue twisters, make bumper stickers, do concrete poetry, write fortune cookies, write want ads, design their own products, write haiku, design invitations and thank you notes, make up pattern poems such as fortunately and unfortunately stories, put together a movie script, and on and on and on.

Once students feel secure in the classroom environment, the teacher's role changes from providing "safe, gimmicky" writing experiences to guiding each student's expressions of more personalized, introspective activities, in which the students reveal their thoughts and insights.

Teaching the writing process begins by motivating the student to want to "jot something down," but it explodes into nurturing the writer through the prewriting, drafting, revising, and postwriting processes, finding "good" in all of the students' expressions, and refining the students' writing by teaching them the aspects of technique and technicality that are not inborn.

**TEACHERS LEARNING**

by Debbie Hickman

"I felt like a celebrity coming out of the woodwork. They were laughing. I was laughing. Even Mr. Boloz was laughing. The teachers really liked my story!"

Students are not the only ones who write. The above comments were made by Dolores Stando, a second grade teacher, after reading her original story at a teachers' meeting. As teachers begin writing, there is no end to the fallout. Teacher self-esteem is raised. Their attitudes toward writing and assigning writing change. Their interest in writing changes. Teachers' interactions with one another change, and the school just becomes a more interesting place to be!

Here is the story Dolores delighted the teachers with, which was later illustrated and presented to the students during our Young Authors' Day celebration.

THE COMPUTER WIZARD

by Dolores Stando

Picture a red roofed, primary schoolhouse in a sea of squishy, grey, splashy mud with a threatening sky of clouds hanging menacingly over the school. In this school is a second grade class of atypical youngsters. Their mouths and bodies are in constant motion. Mrs. Stando, their teacher, used to be a mild-mannered, typical teacher. Now she fears she is on the precipice of a psychological evaluation. In order for Mrs. Stando to be heard above the uproar, her voice rises steadily until it reaches a thunderous crescendo.

Scott, a creative, gifted, persistent child who is consumed with science, is constantly asking questions. Every week Scott performs a scientific experiment for the class. Scott has his own computer at home and is always talking about his computer friend, TXL.

This particular morning Mrs. Stando was introducing a new unit to the class - Magic. No one was paying attention and in exasperation she shrieked, "You remind me of a bunch of monkeys with your constant chattering and moving around."

At these words the light bulb went on in Scott's brain, and a mischievous look glimmered in his eyes. He said, "Mrs. Stando, my computer friend TXL taught me a special magical trick. Please, may I show it to the class?"

Mrs. Stando grasped at the proposal with relief. Perhaps now she could have some peace and a quiet classroom for a little while.

Scott stood in front of the class, spread his arms, closed his eyes, and in a commanding voice said, "5211zs - by the power invested in me by TXL, I change you into monkeys."

Horrified, Mrs. Stando saw her students' skin changing into fur, their hands and feet becoming elongated appendages and their faces turning into monkey faces.

Then turning to Mrs. Stando, Scott uttered the same magic combination of numbers and letters and commanded Mrs. Stando to become a lion. Mrs. Stando found herself down on all fours. She sprang on the sink and looked into the mirror. Looking back at her was a huge, tawny-colored lion. The lion growled and bellowed at Scott. Scott was amazed and stupefied at what he had done.

Just then, the door swung open and Mr. Boloz the principal, stepped into the zoo. He had heard strange noises as he was passing by. "What is going on here? I knew this class was off the wall, but I never expected this. Scott, what has happened?" asked Mr. Boloz.

A flustered and somewhat chagrined Scott explained to Mr. Boloz what he had done. Mr. Boloz shouted, "Change them back immediately!"

Scott thought a moment and then stammered, "I can't remember the magic code."

Mr. Boloz moaned, "You can't remember? Oh my, how will I ever explain this to their parents and the school board? Scott, you've got to do something at once. Go home and ask your computer friend how to change them back into humans."

It was lunch time. Mr. Boloz didn't want the rest of the school to see what had happened. Instead lunch was brought to the class--a lunch of bananas for the monkeys and roast beef

for the lion. The monkeys were swinging from the light fixtures, hanging by their tails, making faces, chewing on the books, letting the water run in the sink, emptying out the desks, throwing the erasers, sitting in the trash cans, and pulling the posters off the walls. The lion growled ferociously at the monkeys, but they ignored her. Instead they jumped on the lion's back and chattered in her ears.

Scott finally returned to school, clutching the magic formula in his sweaty hands. He knew if he failed the wrath of many persons would descend on his head. Entering the classroom with Mr. Boloz looking worried at his side. Scott extended his hands and said "By the power invested in me from TXL, I command you monkeys become children again and you, lion, to become Mrs. Stando --23684100LTS."

Mr. Boloz watched the metamorphosis as the monkeys changed back into children and the lion became Mrs. Stando. Mr. Boloz embraced Scott who was feeling a great sense of relief. In turn, Mr. Boloz hugged the children -- even Mrs. Stando.

The children commented, "It was fun from the beginning, but now we're happy that we're ourselves again." Mrs. Stando went around crying and hugging each child. The children said, "From now on you won't have to holler, we'll listen to you and learn, because we don't want to end up like monkeys." Mrs. Stando realized how much she loved and cared for her class. As for Scott, he has put TXL on hold for awhile and will leave magic to the magicians.

Since writing this story, Dolores has shared other possible story ideas with her colleagues. Although she wonders if she'll ever write another story again, she at least knows that she can write.

My reaction to my own attempts at story writing caused me to reflect on the kinds of writing and feedback I was giving the students. In general, I started to avoid assigning writing topics. Here I was in the midst of a school-wide push to write with children, yet I was shying away from assigning writing. Eventually, I realized that I didn't care to read the students' writing. Too many were simply writing to please me, to meet the expectations of the writing assignment, to get to stay in the LEAP class, or even to compete with their peers. I wanted the students to write because they felt the desire to shape something through writing--similar to what I had been doing in my writing.

Perhaps my teaching situation was not typical. I taught about 130 kindergarten through third graders for 40 minutes a day in the Language Enrichment Acceleration Program (LEAP). Still, I think there are implications in my experience for other types of classrooms. Should we ask kids to write stories if we cannot respond to them honestly? To what degree should we prescribe the writing and the topic for writing? As teachers start growing as writers, it seems that they in turn will demand that the schools become places to foster writing. Or will teachers become frustrated with the pretense of writing and eventually think of writing instruction as merely another fad in teaching?

Since that time, I have been able to let children work in small writing groups and let them write if they choose to write. During our football unit, only one child wrote a football story. Our train unit had two train stories, and our monkeys and ape unit had three monkey stories. But these children were writing because they wanted to, not because I had assigned a particular topic.

Although I feel there is a place for prescribed writing topics to promote creative and critical thinking, I am placing more emphasis on a kind of nurtured, optional writing. I try to make story writing occur naturally in the given context of the unit we are studying. Simply sharing possibilities for stories and modeling writing has produced some motivation for student-initiated writing.

In general, the school fosters a climate for teachers to share writing. For 2 years now, the play for the annual "Christmas extravaganza" has been written by the teachers, with advice from the children and other teachers. Diana Jenness (LEAP teacher) and I collaborated on writing a play loosely adapted from the C.S. Lewis book, The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe. The following year Steve Anderson (language teacher) wrote his own version of How the Grinch Stole Christmas. The plays were well received by the more than capacity audience. However, in addition to presenting an enjoyable program, the teachers experience a sense of ownership as they cooperate in the writing and producing of the play.

Writing for professional publications is also emphasized at the school. Mr. Boloz, who has published several articles and poems in professional education journals, has actively encouraged and supported

teachers in their writing for publication. I have found that when the outlet of writing an article for a professional journal is a possibility, educational moments or insights can have extended meaning. Recently I was struck by a student's ability to linguistically analyze the language of Koko, the famous gorilla who could communicate in 500 sign language words. I defined the experience more clearly when I wrote about it as an article for a professional journal. Without this professional writing outlet, I suspect that my surprise and interest in the children's learning would not have been as thoroughly explored.

Certainly not all teachers want to write about their teaching experiences. However, by creating an environment filled with the possibilities for writing, whether it is poetry, children's books, or professional articles, the chances of teachers engaging in the writing process should naturally increase.

Professional development occurs at more levels and in more ways than simply encouraging teachers to write. Teachers are given opportunities to participate in the development of the curriculum, the philosophy, the budget, and other general concerns of a school. The staff is encouraged to attend workshops, conferences, and take other appropriate kinds of professional leave. University courses complementing the philosophy of the school are provided for both the certified and non-certified staff.

The organization GRIN (Greater Reservation Interdisciplinary Network) was initiated by teachers at the school. Judy Johnson (second grade teacher) was especially instrumental in the development of this support group which meets twice a month to discuss and share teaching ideas and concerns. In addition to providing a support network for teachers, GRIN also has sponsored a conference and is planning another in the future.

Recently we have added an instructional resource room equipped with educational materials, computers, typewriters, a professional library, and work areas for teachers to use. The professional library in the instructional resource room includes books and professional journals not only on teaching but also on social, psychological, and literary issues which directly and indirectly affect teachers' attitudes and practices. The Hurried Child by David Elkind, Lessons from a Child

by Lucy McCormick, The Pueblo Potter by Ruth Bunzel, A Sound of Chariots by Mollie Hunter, and Paste, Pencils, Scissors and Crayons by Gene Baer are all part of the professional library. However, we believe that the responsibility for teaching lies not in the latest method or text available in the instructional resource room or elsewhere but in the teacher. Teaching is more than perfecting a method. It is a continual refining of past attitudes and practices.

Of course, by focusing on the teacher we are ultimately focusing on the child. We believe that caring for children, their childhood, and their learning needs can occur only if we seriously care about the needs of the teachers.

10

## SPECIAL PROGRAMS AND LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

by Sigmund Boloz and Patricia Loughrin

Writing, reading, and integration are appropriate not only in the regular classroom--all students need to see the connections between the real world and what they do in school. However, research indicates that current classroom instruction for the remedial student may actually be a contributing factor to the underachievement of the disabled reader.

For instance, Shavelson and Borko (1979) indicated that children in the highest reading group may be paced 13 times as fast as children in the lowest reading groups, and that test scores indicate the difference in pacing. Research completed by Allington (1977) indicated that while the purpose of remedial reading classes is to provide more reading instruction, students who were assigned to classes in his research sites actually did very little reading during the course of instruction. Finally, Unsworth (1984) cited more than 20 research studies completed between 1975 and 1984 that indicated that instruction geared towards low ability groups may actually be a contributing factor to continued poor performance.

Quality programs and effective strategies should be available to all students. Unfortunately, research by Good (1981) has indicated that we do not treat advanced and remedial students in the same manner. The facts seem to indicate that we not only pay less attention to slower students but that we also have less eye contact with slower students, seat them farther away, criticize them more frequently, give them less feedback, and praise them less than we do higher achieving students.

It is our firm belief that all children can learn if we can but find an avenue which makes sense to them. For most students, this avenue begins with the students seeing the connections between what they are doing at school and what is happening in the real world. It is also enhanced when the students see that significant adults are excited about reading and writing.

Mrs. Footracer describes her successful approach:

I teach in a Learning Disabilities Resource Room. I see eight different groups of K-3 students each day. Rarely had I touched writing, real literature, or drama before. When I was trained as a new special education teacher, I was made to feel like the road to remediation was through drill, practice, and perception exercises. It was becoming a drag, a chore, and it didn't seem to be working any miracles.

Working in a special education classroom with children whose primary language was Navajo, I found it difficult to teach English in a way that interested and excited the students. Another problem was students who had very little English and who were also unable to speak their own language fluently.

Fortunately, our whole school was excited about writing, book making, and reading real books. As a staff, we spent a lot of time talking about how to use these effectively. I decided to implement some of the ideas with my resource students. The students read books about a Navajo boy named Willie Chee. The students enjoyed his adventures so much that we built a theme around the character.

We brainstormed possible situations and titles. They came up with the wildest ideas, such as "Willie Chee and the Knight Rider." But then came the hard part, getting their thoughts onto paper. However, I found that building word power with students and getting them involved with the topics worked.

Most students were hindered by an inability to spell correctly. However, inventive spelling worked well. When I was asked how to spell a word, I usually responded with, "Spell it the way it sounds." I found when I stopped looking at word spelling and valued ideas, these students had so much to say. They were very creative. Some of their stories were hard for me to read, but they could always read them and their ideas were great.

We corrected the spelling together as we moved towards the final draft, and then I typed the stories onto large sheets of paper with a primary typewriter. The students illustrated each page and they enjoyed every minute. The covers were made of cloth, and the pages were bound together on the sewing machine in our school's book making room.

Writing and illustrating their own books enabled the students to see how reading words fit into a contextual unit. Many of them, even after three years of school, hadn't realized the connection. The students practiced reading the books to each other and then read the books to the kindergarten classes. My students and I enjoyed the activities, but more importantly, students who couldn't read a basal found reading these high-interest materials almost easy.

I can honestly say that although it feels good to say my kids are better writers and readers now, the best thing is that they are better students in general. They are happier about writing, about reading, and about themselves. Last week we shared our major group accomplishment with the regular classes that the students come from. We made a slide presentation - wrote, illustrated and recorded a coyote tale. Their "normal" classmates were patting them on the back. The teachers were thanking me for letting the lowest of their low show the others what they can really do. And best of all - I have to kick the kids out of my room when it's time to go.

**Conclusion**

This book is about educating children, but it is also about our beginning. The road we have chosen views education as a process which can not alienate the child. The child must be an active participant in his or her own education, and that education must be meaningful. The approach we advocate is for all students. It exists throughout the school and in all programs.

Like many of our reservation roads, the road we have chosen is often bumpy. It often forks and leads in many directions, but it is an exciting journey. It is a journey just beyond our fingertips.

## Most Frequently Used Words in the GLAD Project

*Word List from Student Writings
Compiled by Sigmund A. Boloz

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| the | said | walk( ) | store |
| I | when | try( ) | stuck |
| and | live | come | them |
| to | one | be | toys |
| my | home | our | work |
| a | dog | sister | fell |
| is | look | to | over |
| he | ran | too | as |
| in | people | day | black |
| was | there | outside | help |
| it | can('t) | trees | sheep |
| at | get | funny | your |
| me | you | into | jump |
| with | some | name | just |
| we | had | Navajo | lake |
| of | man | away | mad |
| got | run | did | other |
| like | has(n't) | food | white |
| went | make | good | chase |
| his | so | thing | eyes |
| they | scare( ) | by | feet |
| house | water | girl | hands |
| then | that | not | open |
| go(ing) | have | sleep | rabbit |
| play( ) | am | told | start |
| are | took | brother | wood(s) |
| on | see | happy | an |
| would(n't) | came | mean | dance |
| eat( ) | because | their | let's |
| mother | but | what | money |
| saw | little | buy | nose |
| out | around | corn | old |
| him | do(n't) | some | year |
| all | off | some( ) | about |
| for | from | bake | door |
| back | animal | very | grandmother |
| she | after | call | mud(dy) |
| big | school | could(n't) | night |
| friend( ) | mom | down | ride |
| up | long | put | us |
| were | | | |

*This list represents the most frequently used words in a 14,000-word sample as indicated in student (grades 1-3) writing published under the GLAD project. Compiled March 1982.



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Mr. Boloz is the principal of Ganado Primary School, Ganado, Arizona. In 1983, Ganado Primary School was selected by the Arizona State Board of Education as one of the 10 outstanding public primary schools in Arizona, and in 1984 the school was selected as one of the 20 finalists in that same recognition program. In the last years, the school has had eight of its programs and practices recognized as "Quality Programs" by the Arizona Department of Education.

Growing up as a bilingual provided Mr. Boloz with an early sensitivity to the unique, powerful, and exciting world of education. As a result, he has been active in the education of bilingual students, and in the study and the teaching of language literacy for the past 14 years.

He has published over 30 articles and numerous poems concerning administration, curriculum development, and the development of language literacy. In January 1986, Mr. Boloz was recognized as one of the outstanding school executives in North America by The Executive Educator.

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Mrs. Hickman has been teaching and developing programs at the Ganado Primary School for the past 5 years, and is currently working as the instructional resource teacher. In this capacity, she is in charge of the school's curriculum development, and acts as a master teacher. Her previous teaching experiences include the development of the school's Language Enrichment Accelerated Program, work at the intermediate level and college level, and ESL teaching with the Peace Corps.

She has published articles in professional journals, and has presented topics related to classroom experiences to several teacher groups.

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Mrs. Loughrin has been active in English language education for the past 13 years. Presently employed at Shadow Mountain High School in Phoenix, Arizona, her degrees in English Education are from Marquette University in Wisconsin and Arizona State University. Twice selected as a participant in the "Literacy in the 80s" conference at the University of Michigan, Mrs. Loughrin has also acted as a judge for the annual state poetry and essay contests.

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